2020 COMMUNITY

Brighton and Hove

Community Engagement Framework

Draft Consultation Report

*We asked … you said…
we did!*

DRAFT

1   **Executive Summary**

Following a detailed discussion of research findings into community engagement activity in the city in autumn 2007, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), known in Brighton and Hove as the 2020 Community Partnership, approved the development of a community engagement framework for the city in February 2008. The research highlighted a number of issues, including recognition that effective community engagement does drive up the quality of services. In its role to bring key partners together, the LSP identified a need to improve the co-ordination of community engagement initiatives and to ensure that staff with a responsibility for delivering engagement support have access to appropriate levels of training and support.

1.1 The LSP's intention is that the Framework will pull together agreed over-arching principles of engagement. These principles will be underpinned by an action plan to improve the type and quality of different engagement activity in the city by public bodies and community and voluntary organisations.

1.2 The Framework is to be owned by the LSP and signed up to by all key sectors and agencies in the city, including the Council, the Primary Care Trust and the Police. The Council supported the development of the framework, which was guided by a working group made up of representatives from the constituent organisations and partnerships of the LSP, including representatives of community and voluntary sector.

1.3 The plan for the Framework development process included a wide range of activities and approaches, and was not solely reliant on the consultation documents. For example, discussions have been held with a number of organisations, partnerships and groups that have focussed on their own experiences of engagement or of delivering engagement and their priorities for the future. The development process had a degree of flexibility to allow for different groups/organisations to be consulted in a way which best suits them.

1.4 Two consultation documents were produced. A full version primarily aimed at large organisations and partnerships with responsibility for engaging with communities and, in response to recommendations from the working group, the project team also produced a shorter version aimed at smaller community groups. Consultation about the framework has been aimed at partnerships, organisations and groups as opposed to individual citizens. When implementation of the framework begins the LSP will seek to involve citizens in the design and development of new

engagement tools, techniques and structures. This is probably when it will be most meaningful to individuals.

1.5   Records of the meetings of the working group were and are available on the 2020 Community Partnership website.

1.6   The development of the framework is a local priority and has not been driven by any national policy or requirement. There is no "must do" or map to describe what an engagement framework should look like. This presents its own complexities and challenges. Taking a collaborative and creative approach has helped to define the way forward, whilst listening to people has offered insight into content, aims and actions.

2   **Resources**
Existing resources have largely been used to drive and develop this work, only at the closing stages was additional support considered as a necessary addition to maintain momentum. Intelligent planning and the drawing up of a development process have been key to this work and have demonstrated that complex and challenging communication across a range of interested parties is achievable if the messages are clear and the focus maintained. Maximising existing relationships and using existing structures has helped secure buy-in and helped to build trust. Ensuring that there were clear actions and agreed ways forward has helped to keep the project on course. The working group's advice and combined wisdom provided (the project management team) a clear baseline and confidence for good and steady progress.

2.1   The project management team recognised early on that the learning from this process would be crucial to the Frameworks development and future success. This is explored in more detail at the end of this report. This, of course, is useful and reflects the spirit of the standards outlined in the consultation document.

3   **Consultation Process**
A project management team was set up to oversee a three month consultation process, the team being supported and advised by the working group.   Through discussion with the working group a "development process" (*Appendix B*) was mapped out and agreed. The aim of this process was to provide a guide to the project management team, ensuring that the project remained on course and that key groups, partners, partnerships and representatives had the opportunity to input and shape the Framework itself.

3.1 The working group reviewed this list at each of its meetings. Partners were regularly asked to highlight potential gaps in the process and in those targeted to be involved. Needless-to-say, the list was not exhaustive and other activities and events have taken place in support of the development process. This, in itself, begins to demonstrate some of the standards that people have identified as priorities. It also extends to a commitment to good practice and showcases the positive relationships that such a Framework can both build upon and deliver.

3.2 **Tools and Activities**

The consultation process used a range of methods which included questionnaires (designed for both larger organisations and smaller community groups), 1:1 meetings and opportunities for specific interest groups to come together and offer their views about the Framework's development.

3.2.1 The questionnaires, when used face-to-face, were used to guide conversations and elicit detailed information from representatives and others about both their understanding and experience of community engagement. We asked questions like: What does community engagement mean to you? What are the benefits of being engaged and what are the difficulties? What standards should we have for public and voluntary and community sector organisations who wish to create a dialogue with communities? What actions do we need to take to ensure residents and communities can influence and take control of the things that effect their lives?

3.2.2 Importantly, each consultation exercise was tailored to the specific group, organisation or partnership. Wherever possible the project team discussed with the chair or the lead person for the group how best to approach and work with the group. This helped to ensure that the session was relevant and took into consideration the needs of the group and/or its members.

3.2.2 Many community and voluntary groups along with public agencies like the Police and the Primary Care Trust have given their views in response to these questions.

3.2.3 In addition, the project management team actively sought opportunities to publicise the Framework and the opportunities that had been made available for people to both respond and get involved.

3.2.4 Following the official closing date of the consultation process, the project management team organised a "Drop-in" event at the Jubilee Library. The event was widely publicised and was open at two points in the day (10am – 2pm and then 4pm - 7pm). The aim of the event was to offer opportunities to all those who have been

involved in the consultation to see what the overall feedback and contributions have been. It was also an opportunity for participants to show their support by "voting" for the key themes, the over-arching aims and the basic and potential new activities that the Framework would begin to address.

The project management team were keen to ensure that this activity offered a final check in terms of what people had said. It also provided a unique opportunity to check language and understanding, particularly in relation to the intrinsic flow and direction of the Framework's development.

3.3 Who we spoke to – A case study

During the consultation period over 40 sessions/meetings and events were held with groups including council tenants representatives, local action teams, youth consultants, older people, people from the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and strategic partnerships. Including individual responses to the questionnaires, the process has engaged some 520 individuals.

You can find a full list of contributors and acknowledgements with some analysis of the types of groups and partners who took part in this consultation process in *Appendix A*

A Case study

Aim

To give Mosaic members the opportunity to hear about the Community Engagement Framework and for them to offer comments, ideas and suggestions as to the content and priorities that the Framework should address.

How it worked

Using questionnaires the Project Management Team held a series of 1:1 interviews at Mosaic's "Bring-a-Dish" event at Preston Park. Over a 3 hour period 20 people were involved in some detailed conversations, offering views as to what supports or helps people to be involved in their local communities and what the benefits are.

Question 1 - What does being involved/engaged in your community mean to you?

Key messages: "Having a say in my local community and being able to comment on what is lacking and how we can all work to put it right. It's about good information about meetings and engagement activities and knowing that your views are taken seriously. It's important that you are involved in the decisions that will affect you – engagement should happen at lots of different levels and be broad ranging. It's about meeting people who share the same things – less isolation. Opportunities to volunteer/work and support the community building an extended family – having a friendly environment to live in".

Question 2 - What are the benefits of being engaged?

Key Messages: "A feeling that you are a part of the community builds community cohesion. The more people are involved the better the services. Having a say in your environment helps with feeling a responsibility for where you live – having more control helps to feeling safer. Brings a universal benefit for all – reduces crime and anti-social behaviour - less social isolation - improved health, helping with mental health and wellbeing. Helps communities, brings people together inc. neighbours - love, reduce crime - "neighbourliness" - feel free to talk to others – helps to promote meeting people from other countries/engage in a friendly way - fear of crime makes it hard - need to be reassured".

Question 3 - What makes it possible for you to be engaged?

Key Messages: "Having (relevant) information and having access to training and learning opportunities were universal responses with people having a varying need for additional support inc. support for carers, BSL and interpreting. Being informed in time and having a formal way of influencing policies. Ensuring a welcome and friendly reception at meetings (community & council), with pointers and helpful tips to help people to be involved. More public spaces for people to come together to meet informally - need more space for bad weather. FOOD! brings people together, so does funding to run events to get people together (small grants to bring people together) helps people get involved (volunteering). Funding (needs to be more long-term to help organisations engage/difficult to get good quality workers - short supply of qualified/experienced workers)".

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4   Summary of Feedback

4.1   The consultation elicited, unsurprisingly, a vast range of suggestions, opinion, comments and feedback. Much of this was positive and hopeful of new and improved engagement activity.

4.2 There was also a great deal of scepticism that views would not be taken into account and that *much wished for feedback and ongoing involvement* would not be forthcoming. This was a commonly held view regardless of sector, group or representative that had helped in informing the process.

4.3 The project management team managed expectations by offering contributors direct feedback based on participants involvement and asked those taking part to see this as part of journey that potentially plays out over a period of time.

4.4 People were generally accepting of this as most people understood some of the complexities and challenges that developing such a Framework presented.

4.5 Clearly an ongoing dialogue is essential if this process is to continue to be supported and the principles established over time.

4.6 **The Themes**

The following points emerged as key themes from the consultation. They were raised as either repeated issues throughout the consultation or were specifically highlighted within consultation sessions as being of high priority. Due to the informal and wide ranging way in which views and contributions were gathered it is not possible to quantify the responses. However, there is good quality evidence to support these themes. They are listed below, in no particular order, with a brief explanation/description that summarise the messages given.

4.6.1 **Information**
Lots of comments about the need for clear, timely and "non-jargonistc" information. Keep it simple and keep it real. Open and honest dialogue. Use a range of methods i.e. Community Radio – written material can be too long and inaccessible for some.

Areas of influence – what can/can't be influenced?
(Linked to above) Respondents wanted to express their understanding of what is realistic and what might be expected and achievable – sometimes information or processes suggest a greater or wider influence and thus raise expectations. Clearer information and explanations as to why something cannot happen following peoples' input were common themes.

4.6.2 **Two way dialogue (Communication)**
Those leading consultation processes need to know what they are doing i.e. how to reach target audience, appropriate research, understanding and using different techniques as required. Must be a two-way process with feedback being important – people want to know how they have changed/improved things. Appropriate/more realistic timeframes are needed to allow this to happen.

Support for a co-ordinated approach

(Linked to above) Participants were keen to stress the importance of statutory sector partners working more closely together. Greater communication between officers and members, external agencies and senior level management was highlighted as essential. Many groups expressed the difficulty they face when confronted with simultaneous requests for their involvement and having a lack of capacity to deal with them effectively. Some groups expressed the concern and anxiety this brings in feeling unable to represent their groups' interests at the appropriate time and place. This has considerable implications when thinking about how engagement works in practice, especially in building and sustaining strong, effective and positive relationships.

4.6.3 **Resources and training (individuals and cross-sector)**
People wanted to see a commitment to long-term funding and to community development support to underpin the community engagement framework. Training and development "that mixes everyone up!" was identified as essential. Training and support to *all* partners across different sectors and including residents, residents groups and community activists.

4.6.4 **Creative approach to partnership working (not "usual suspects")**
Participants recognise the strength that partnership working can bring in affecting positive change/improvements. Statutory partners should take a more creative and flexible approach and not rely on the usual routes, representatives or individuals to deliver outcomes. Participants from groups expressed a need for more "informality" and to make better use of existing links that groups have and the resources to facilitate this kind of reaching out. All contributors highlighted the need for partners to involve people in different ways, looking at good practice to improve people's experience of getting involved. Ensuring/protecting the "neutrality" of Community and Voluntary sector Forum was seen as critical.

4.6.5 **Feeling at home – (more control/taking responsibility)**
Many participants expressed the importance of feeling that you are a part of the community, and that how strongly people feel this builds or contributes to community cohesion. The following comments, from one group, highlight this well -

"Being engaged supports the wellbeing of the community it helps and encourages others to make it a better place to live. Extends lifespan, builds pride in the environment, makes a difference and enables change. Improves my own locality and other people's lives, builds good friendships and encourages a good community spirit - makes people feel better. Getting to know one's community, its needs, its problems and a chance to do something that makes things better – helps to identifying the needs of the community.

Feeling part of something helps with feeling safe, funding supports this and friendship - discovering/sharing/increasing skills and networks. Finding out about neighbourhood activities, getting out and about in the community meeting and listening to people"[1]

4.6.6 **Empowering**

Participants were very clear that they felt projects and programmes are more successful when "driven" by the people and that engagement should go further than consultation and decision making. Communities should have opportunities to manage and support the delivery of local services.

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[1] Portland Road and Clarendon Forum – Community Engagement Exercise 7th July 2008

4.7   **Developing the Over-Arching Aims and the Actions**

The following key project proposals have been drawn from what people have said. In particular, from the emerging themes expressed above and the through work done by the working group looking at what priorities should go forward in planning for action. This raw data has formed the basis for ongoing discussions about the over-arching aims and actions of the Framework, providing the foundations for discussions that have helped to both refine and more clearly define the Framework's content.

4.7.2 **Key projects identified are:**

1)   People development
2)   Information and communication improvements
3)   Partnership development & agreements
4)   Empowerment projects

People development
a. Training
b. Toolkit or resource centre
c. Induction process
d. Job descriptions
e. Volunteering scheme

Information & communication improvement
a. Webpage listing 'how you can get involved' and 'support to get involved in your community'
b. Database of all consultation in the city – past, present and future
c. Refresh of the research governance protocol
d. External communication to citizens

Partnership development & agreements
a. Refresh of the Stronger Communities Partnership
b. Joint funding of Stronger Communities Programme to deliver cross-sector: co-ordination of activity, facilitation of good practice, community engagement network (annual conference), evaluation and review process, common community representatives support policy
c. Partnership agreement on the role of voluntary and community sector to enable community engagement
d. Partnership agreement on role of community development

Empowerment projects
a. Asset transfer pilot
b. Participatory budgeting pilot

5 **The Framework Pathway to Final Agreement**

From the outset a clearly defined route was laid out to ensure that the framework moved forward towards final agreement by all of the partners. The following represents the final part of that process -

Sign off process	WHEN
Copy of the draft Community Engagement Framework and the consultation report sent to all stakeholders that have been involved	End of September
Statutory Partners i.e. Police, Health, Fire Service – sign off	October/ November
LSP Partnerships i.e. Healthy City, Learning Partnership – sign off	October/ November
Public Service Board – final comments	14th October
BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Commission – final comments	21st October
2020 Community Partnership development session on community engagement	22nd October
Working group – close down meeting	6th November
BHCC Cabinet – sign off	20th November
Stronger Communities Partnership meeting – sign off	20th November
2020 Community Partnership board – sign off	2nd December

6 **Conclusions**

6.1 **General**

The overall impact of the consultation process has been positive with over 40 sessions/meetings and events held with groups including council tenants representatives, local action teams, youth consultants, older people, people from the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and strategic partnerships.

6.1.2 Including individual responses to the questionnaires the process has engaged some 520 individuals. Participants have been positive about their involvement, but generally wanted to see action that delivered positive change for communities.

"Well planned and delivered "process" but the final result is the changes in practise that actually happen"(consultation respondent)

6.1.2 There has been a genuine interest and commitment to the process with the project management team supporting this by ensuring that, where requested, notes and feedback from meetings where made available to participants. This was reinforced at the Drop-in event where all the feedback documents were made available. The event attracted 40 people throughout the day many of whom had taken part in previous sessions and were keen to see how their contributions had been taken forward.

6.1.3 The content of the Framework documents reflects directly the input that people have offered in meetings and events designed to help shape it. Detailed analysis of notes and feedback have helped to ensure that all they key messages, important points and issues are gathered together and expressed throughout the document.

*"Being asked! Being asked to encourage neighbourhood involvement."
(consultation respondent)*

6.1.4 The final part of the Framework's development was to go through the various stages of sign-off. The results of which have been ………..*(to be completed end Dec 2008)*

6.2 **Learning through the process**

Although ambitious, it has been achievable using existing resources. The project management team have recognised that officers whose roles are outward/public facing need to be bold and get involved. Good planning and communication have helped manage expectations, mapping out where and when things can happen, explaining when they can't and talking to people openly about their involvement. Accurate records of communication with key individuals, the voluntary and community sector and others have helped to avoid the process and communication being derailed by individuals who have other or unknown agendas. Ensuring that the process has and can be seen to have integrity has been vital to successful engagement.

*"Great staff who are willing to listen and give their views as well"
(consultation respondent)*

6.2.1 The setting up and building of a strong working group, referencing them and involving them in the process of setting the work and development plan has had a significant role to play in ensuring that all sectors had both ownership and ongoing input into the Framework's development. Meetings that focused on the development process and identified gaps

helped keep the process on track with meetings also having a practical/working focus that looked at actions and outcomes.

6.2.2 The process has linked to, and moved forward, related agendas and has had a positive impact, working with existing structures and relationships. For example refugee groups in the city met, in their own space, for the first time and agreed to come together again in future meetings. The City Inclusion Partnership benefitted from the Framework's development helping it to define the areas of its own work and remit. In addition, the project team have learnt that being able to accept and feel safe in admitting mistakes and offering solutions as to how put them right, as the process moved forward, was a crucial part of building trust and buy-in. People expect this. Providing leadership and facilitation offered the opportunity for different opinions to be listened to without the expectation that those leading the process were 'experts' or knew better than anyone else. The process benefitted from the support of partners and the groups that they support and have good relationships with.

6.2.3 The Framework and its development process offer the opportunity for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and reflect on its new and emerging role. With the possibility of using its investigative function to champion and recommend new and creative engagement practice across the city and to look at itself as an engagement tool, using its powers to drive up quality of community engagement.

6.2.4 Brighton and Hove has a wealth of expertise. The process has shown the city should have greater confidence to lead on local priorities and agendas that are not driven by national directives or frames. Initiatives such as this can positively impact and improve outcomes that relate to legal requirements and national policy.

6.2.5 New processes or initiatives that have an engagement element may have to fit into other processes or external factors that are of benefit to the overall outcome. This can mean that timeframes can be challenging. However, if it is made explicit why a certain timescale is necessary and staff have the necessary project management and change management skills this need not be a problem.

6.2.6 Bearing the above in mind, and in particular relation to the Framework, it is important to recognise that this is the beginning of a journey – community engagement is an ongoing process.

6.3 **Next Steps**

The Framework has developed 3 over-arching aims -

1. Improve engagement activity that enhances the lives of people and their communities

2. Improve engagement activity that ensures opportunity for all

3. Improve activity that drives up the quality of services and makes better use of resources

The Stronger Communities Partnership will be responsible for taking the work forward, developing a detailed action plan that will identify lead partners and staff responsible for delivering the Frameworks aims and actions, and for monitoring partners compliance with the community engagement standards.

Alongside this significant piece of work there are a further three global observations that the project management team feel this report should highlight –

Change over time – this consultation has already started a process of change. However, the production of the Framework document is not the end of the process, but the very beginning and one that should go on to implement positive outcomes. The Community Engagement Framework is not a static entity; its activity will be monitored, reviewed and adapted over time.

Organisational cultural change – the Local Strategic Partnership is looking to support better co-ordination and best use of resources with a view to drive up quality. This requires partners to look at their own organisations and how they do things, how they link together and how already strong relationships can work better and more effectively for the people living, working and socialising in the city.

Raising awareness, training and employee development – the ongoing success and delivery of the Framework's objectives, the relationships that it aims to foster and the services it aims to improve relies heavily on an understanding of community engagement and the benefits it can bring. The Framework identifies actions about employee training and development and looks to explore the possibility new volunteering schemes. Linked to organisational change, raising awareness at all levels and developing programmes to address skills gaps are vital to the city's success in building and sustaining safer, stronger and vibrant communities.
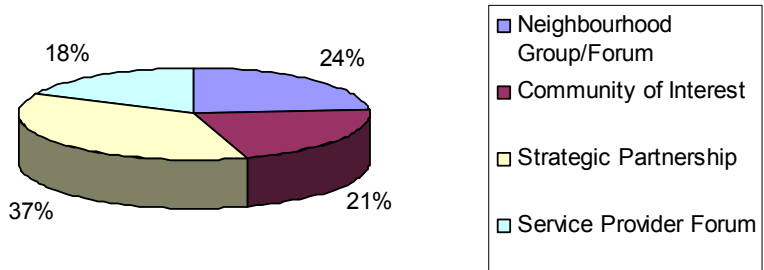
Appendix A

1.   Some Examples of Groups Involved

The Framework was discussed at/presented to the following events/meetings/groups:

- o Councillors seminar (Members of Conservative, Green and Labour and Liberal Democrat parties present)
- o Council tenants session (representatives from across the city -
- o Community workers conference (council, primary care trust and voluntary and community sector workers)
- o Stronger Communities Partnership meeting and annual conference including a session on engagement by the Federation of Disabled People
- o BHCC overview & scrutiny commission
- o 2020 Community Partnerships: Learning Partnership, Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, Arts Commission, Advice Strategy Services Group, Strategic Housing Partnership, Economic Partnership
- o Public service board
- o Children & young peoples consultation & communication group
- o Sussex Partnership Trust
- o City employment skills group
- o BHCC community safety forum
- o Mosaic
- o Local action teams - Bevendean
- o Neighbourhood actions groups/forums: Tarner, Eastern Road, Hangleton & Knoll, Bristol Estate, Portland Road & Clarendon,
- o Adult learning group and Neighbourhood learning in deprived communities group
- o Advice services network
- o Adult social care transformation group
- o Racial harassment forum executive panel
- o Refugee community groups meeting
- o Domestic violence forum
- o Older persons council and pensioners forum
- o Youth consultants
- o Community development managers group
- o Black and minority ethnic community partnership
- o BHCC workers forum, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender; Black and minority ethnic; and Disabled workers
- o Community and Voluntary Sector Forum e-Dialogue
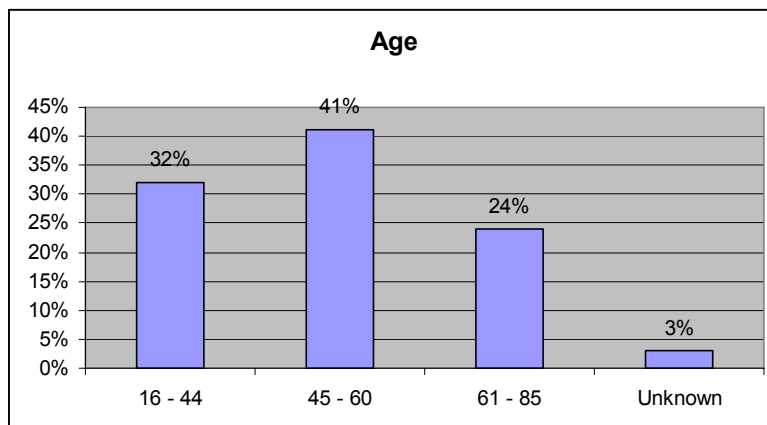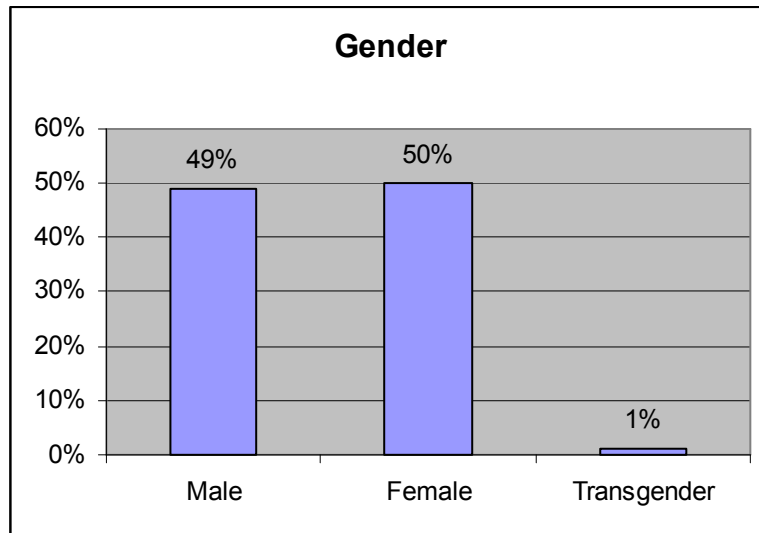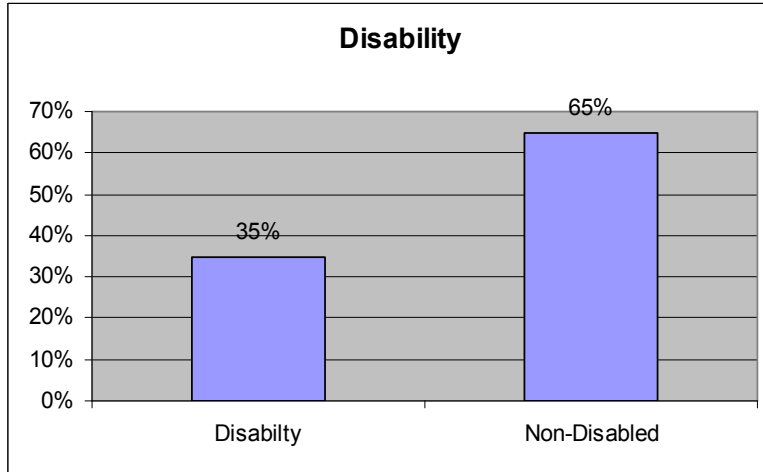- o Sussex Community Interpreting website

Groups Profile

- Neighbourhood Group/Forum — 24%
- Community of Interest — 21%
- Strategic Partnership — 37%
- Service Provider Forum — 18%

Appendix A

2.

Participants' Profile

Gender

Male	Female	Transgender
49%	50%	1%

Age

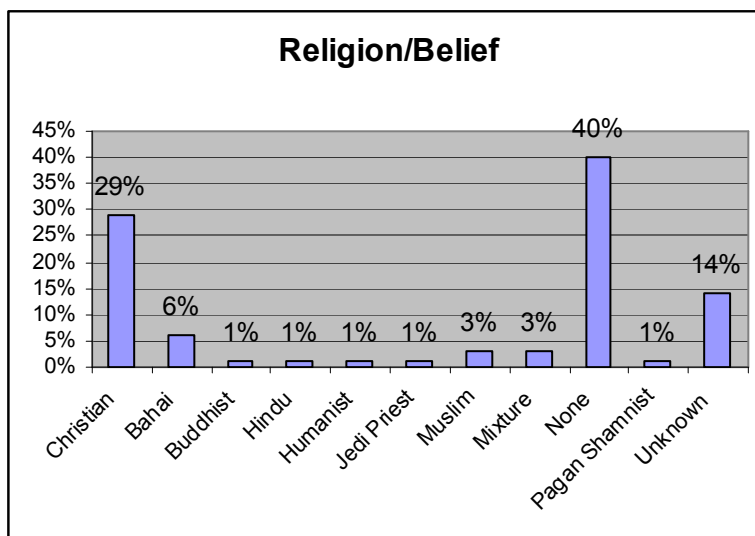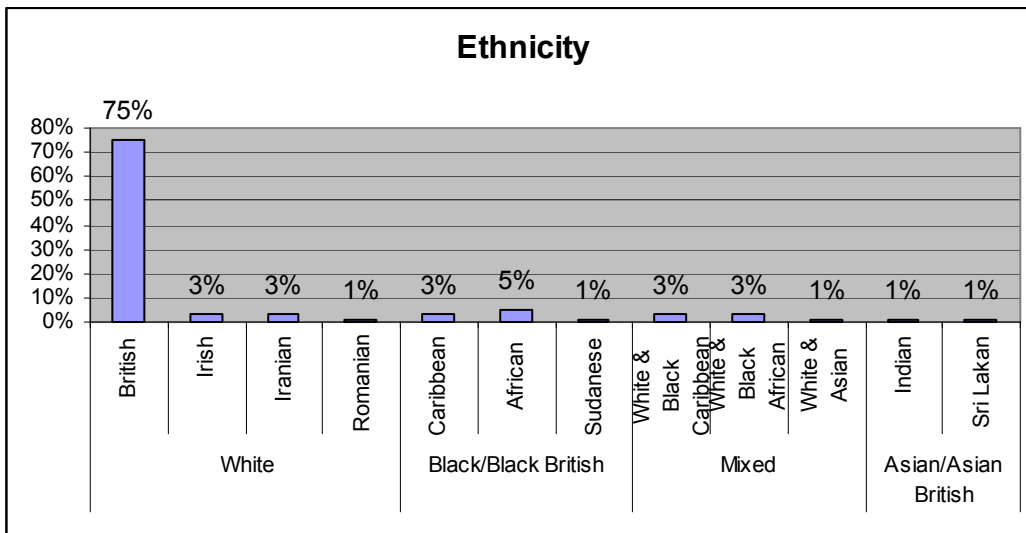| 16 - 44	45 - 60	61 - 85	Unknown
32%	41%	24%	3%

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Disability

Notes

1. Out of 520 participants 63 people completed the monitoring forms (12%)
2. Categories with no responses do not appear
3. Self definitions are included in "Ethnicity" and "Religion/Belief"

Ethnicity

Religion/Belief

209

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Sexual Orientation