

Community Engagement Toolkit



May 2025



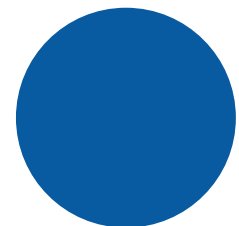
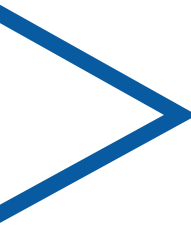
About this toolkit

This tool kit provides advice and external resources to help Community Councils build confidence, develop skills, and enhance creativity in their community engagement activities.



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What is Community Engagement?

According to the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#),

“community engagement is a purposeful process which develops a working relationship between communities, community organisations and public and private bodies to help them to identify and act on community needs and ambitions. It involves respectful dialogue between everyone involved, aimed at improving understanding between them and taking joint action to achieve positive change... Good community engagement is not an outcome in itself, but is intended to lead to better democratic participation, better services and better outcomes for communities.”

The next section will provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of community councils as they relate to community engagement, and future sections will elaborate on the National Standards for Community Engagement and how and when different engagement methods could be used.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Government Act (Scotland) 1973 established and set out the purpose for community councils in Scotland. [Section 51\(2\) of the Act](#) states that “the general purpose of a community council shall be to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable”.

Ascertaining, coordinating, and expressing the views of the community requires community councils to engage with their community.

[The City of Edinburgh Scheme for Community Councils](#) is the governance framework under which community councils in the City of Edinburgh Council local authority area are to comply with and forms the constitution of each community council.

The Scheme includes an overview of the roles and responsibilities for Edinburgh community councils, many of which relate to community engagement. Some of these are highlighted below.

- “The general purpose of community councils is to act as voices for their local areas, articulating the views and concerns of individuals and groups on a wide range of issues of public concern, including making representations to the City of Edinburgh Council, other public sector bodies and private agencies on matters within their sphere of interest.”
- “Community councils should engage widely with their local communities to represent their views when engaging with the City of Edinburgh Council. It is

essential that these views are demonstrated to be representative of the community, and each community council should expect to be able to explain why it has taken any particular position on behalf of its community. Community councils will endeavour to devise strategies to secure greater involvement by all sectors of their communities.”

- “Community councils should be able to demonstrate how they are fulfilling their responsibilities as representative bodies by provision of an annual report and other forms of engagement such as newsletters, surveys, websites and use of social media.”

Please note that this is just a selection of the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Scheme, and all community councillors should be familiar with the entirety of the Scheme.

The Scottish Community Councils website, which is managed by the Improvement Service on behalf of Scottish Government, includes lots of helpful information for community councils. Please take a couple minutes to [read their page on Community Engagement](#).

Engagement and Inclusion Officer Bearer

[The Scheme](#) also outlines the four office bearers to be appointed by each community council. One of these office bearers is the Engagement and Inclusion Office Bearer. The [Community Council Guidance document](#) details the duties for this role, which includes identifying issues with engagement and inclusion in your community, conducting activities to promote engagement and inclusion, providing updates on these activities at meetings, and producing the annual engagement and inclusion report.

As the person responsible for leading and reporting on engagement activities, the Engagement and Inclusion Office Bearer must be knowledgeable and confident in community engagement. However, it is equally important that all community council members develop a solid understanding of community engagement. This is because engagement is not limited to one role but should be a regular part of the everyday interactions and communication between your community council and the community, whether formal or informal.

National Standards for Community Engagement

The National Standards for Community Engagement are “good-practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement, and improve what happens as a result.”

The 7 National Standards are:

- Inclusion
- Support
- Planning
- Working Together
- Methods
- Communication
- Impact

Please take a moment to look over the [National Standards for Community Engagement document](#). This resource describes each Standard in detail including what good practice looks like and real-world examples.

VOiCE (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement) is planning and recording software that assists individuals, organisations and partnerships to design and deliver effective community engagement. The VOiCE tool was developed to help put the National Standards into practice, and has the user respond to questions that address the National Standards as you go. You can [read more about this software](#) on the VOiCE website and consider if it would be useful for your community council.

We would recommend now taking a bit of time to review what you have learned so far about community engagement, the national standards, and the VOiCE tool by watching [this webinar for community councillors](#) delivered by the Scottish Community Development Centre. The video is 27 minutes long but the main bit we recommend ends at around 20 minutes.

Preparing for your engagement

We know that it can be tricky to decide how to approach your community and get their views. Fortunately, there are a range of tools and methods out there which can help you to do this in an effective and impactful way.

Things to bear in mind:

Community engagement is not 'one size fits all'. You will likely need to employ a range of different techniques to engage different people.

No method is perfect. We know that there are different circumstances that can shape your approach to community engagement including time, money, and other resources. If you consider it like any other piece of research, you might want to note the approach's limitations when presenting your results.

It takes time to plan, deliver and analyse community engagement processes. You might want to get other people involved if possible.

Here's an outline of the community engagement journey. Remember that these steps are moveable and depending on your resources you can expand or remove some of the steps.

Planning your engagement

It's a good idea to map out how you want to deliver your community engagement. Things to consider include:

- What is the aim of your engagement? It can be helpful to summarise this in a short statement to use throughout your engagement.
- What are your core questions? No matter what forum you are doing your engagement in, being clear on what you want to find out will help to keep the conversation relevant.

[This module from SCDC](#) includes a helpful guide to planning your community conversation.

- What's your timeline? Have you got any hard deadlines coming up? Does a community engagement report need to be submitted by a certain date?
- Who do you want to reach in your engagement? How can you include seldom included voices? It can be useful to think about a mixture of techniques that involve people coming to you and you going to people (see the methods section below).
- How are you going to record your responses to the engagement activity? For example, will you be taking notes or be interpreting posters made by participants?
- What useful and relevant research or engagement has already been done in your area? See research section below.
- Are there any events or holidays that you can join in with (for example with a stall) or avoid (because people won't be available then)?
- What resources do you need? You might need funding or other people to help implement your plan. You'll also want to consider other materials and spaces (printing, pens, online accounts, projectors, meeting spaces) that you'll need before you get started.
- How will you communicate and promote with the community? Think about how you will keep stakeholders informed and engaged. Page nine in the [Planning Aid Scotland Local Place Plan guide](#) gives some simple suggestions as to what you can consider when preparing your communications.

- Who is going to support your engagement? Depending on the extent of your engagement, it might be helpful to form a short life steering group, made up of local representatives who can help to shape and plan an engagement activity.
- What engagement is already happening or has happened recently? This can help you to avoid clashes and engagement fatigue. But you might also be able to pair up or share information and resources.
- How will you [evaluate your engagement](#)? It's important to consider how you might measure the success of your engagement activity at the planning stage. Depending on the activity, you may want to reflect midway to assess whether your approach is meeting its goals. It is always important to reflect afterward and apply any lessons learned to improve future engagement.

Once you've thought about the above, you can develop your action plan. Here you should outline the steps involved in your engagement process, including who is responsible for each task.

You can draft your engagement plan very easily, either using a notebook, using software like Word, or other online tools. [The VOiCE tool](#) offers a helpful place online to plan and record your community engagement plan.

[The Planning Aid Scotland Local Place Plan Tool](#), is intended for use on Local Place Plans however it offers a useful guide for planning any community engagement activity.

Social services organisation Iriss also has good [project planning tools](#) that are engaging and easy to use.

Research

Desktop research is a great way to make sure that your community engagement approach is informed and useful. You might want to find out:

- What research and engagement has already happened in your area. This can include useful information about similar initiatives and can help you to decide what you need to enquire about in more depth.
- Context. Understanding your community, either of interest (a common identity, experience, or activity) or place (a geographic location or area), can inform how to plan your engagement and who to reach. You can also use this information to preface any engagement output or report that you produce, giving readers more information about your area.

Pre-engagement

You might find it helpful to incorporate a pre-engagement stage into your engagement plan. This can be particularly useful in community engagement

exercises for outputs like Local Place Plans where you want to get very specific recommendations from the community.

A pre-engagement exercise, for example a broad community survey, can help you to understand the issues that exist within a community so you can explore these in more depth in the main section of your engagement.

Keep in mind that if there has already been recent and relevant community engagement, this might serve your purpose. A risk with pre-engagement exercises is that community members might experience engagement fatigue or might be confused as to why you are asking them for similar information within close timeframes.

Engagement methods

Below are two tables outlining community engagement methods and tools. The first outlines methods you can use to conduct your research. The second describes a range of forums that you can use these methods in. This is not an exhaustive list – there will be unique opportunities that come up in your area. It can be useful to remember that community engagement does not have to look a certain way. As long as you are clear on the purpose and aims of your engagement, and how you are going to record your information, then community engagement can happen almost anywhere.

Each method essentially acts as a vehicle for conversations of various sizes, on an individual level, as a small group or larger group.

Method	Detail	Where it works
Questionnaire	Questionnaires are distributed to gather information and opinions from many people in a standardised way. These can be done online or in-person. Read more about using online forms/questionnaires , including common platforms, in this guide from SCVO.	Online platforms including social media Mail-outs The content of surveys can also be used as a foundation for any other community conversation.
Dot voting	Participants use stickers or dots to vote on their preferred ideas or solutions displayed on a board or flipchart paper.	Workshops

	<p>This is useful for forums where solutions have been decided prior to or by the end of a session.</p> <p>Check out Health Improvement Scotland's (HIS) resource on dot voting for more information.</p>	
Poster drawing	<p>Participants create posters to visually express their ideas and solutions.</p> <p>As above, this type of activity is also good to employ alongside a small group conversation with notes captured.</p>	<p>Workshop</p> <p>Community Forums</p> <p>School or youth group sessions</p>
Idea box	<p>A box where participants can anonymously submit their ideas and suggestions. This could be included as part of a workshop or as an ongoing activity by putting it in an accessible spot, like a library, over a number of days.</p>	<p>Workshop</p> <p>Community Forums</p> <p>School or youth group sessions</p>
Two stars and a wish	<p>This is a tool to frame very simple conversations about a subject. For example, tell me two things you like about your place (your stars) and one thing you would like to change (your wish).</p>	<p>Workshop</p> <p>Community Forums</p> <p>School or youth group sessions</p>
Suggestion walls	<p>Large boards, flipcharts, or paper where attendees can write or draw their suggestions and ideas to a prompt.</p>	<p>Public exhibitions</p> <p>Drop-in sessions</p>
Exhibition boards	<p>Visual displays that present information and invite feedback from attendees. These can be posters on boards or flipcharts with information and/or questions on them.</p>	<p>Drop-in sessions</p> <p>Workshops</p> <p>Stalls and stands</p>
Photovoice	<p>Participants take photos to capture community issues and strengths, then discuss them. A group facilitator encourages participants to think critically about the subject they are discussing.</p>	<p>Workshop</p> <p>Community Forums</p> <p>School or youth group sessions</p>

	<p>This example by Police Scotland shows how they used a Photovoice activity to engage with young people in Wallacetown.</p>	
World Cafe	<p>A structured conversational process where groups discuss a topic at several tables, switching tables periodically and sharing insights. Each table might have a facilitator and/or note taker, or tables might be self-facilitated with participants noting their thoughts on post-its or on a piece of flipchart paper.</p> <p>It is important that the theme or topic of each table is clearly outlined, so that participants know what to expect.</p> <p>Check out this overview of world cafes from Involve.</p>	<p>Workshops</p> <p>Community Forums</p> <p>School or youth group sessions</p>
Place Standard Tool	<p>A framework to assess the quality of a place based on various factors like accessibility, safety, and amenities. The Place Standard tool helpfully includes prompts that you can use to facilitate conversations. It can take between one to three hours to get through all the questions, depending on the nature of the group.</p> <p>There are also alternative versions of the tool including versions for children and young people and the Place Standard with Climate Lens.</p> <p>The suite of Place Standard tools also features an inclusive communication guide, which contains valuable tips relevant to all engagement.</p>	<p>Workshops</p> <p>Meetings</p> <p>Community Forums</p> <p>School or youth group sessions</p>
Participatory mapping	<p>Invite community members to draw maps (or draw on maps) of their place, highlighting areas of importance. This is also an opportunity to have a small group conversation with participants about their</p>	<p>Workshop</p> <p>Community Forums</p> <p>School or youth group sessions</p>

	<p>area or the topic you are doing community engagement on.</p> <p>You can also use participatory mapping for other (non-place) related topics.</p> <p>Check out this example of using participatory mapping from Adaptation Scotland.</p>	
SWOT Analysis	<p>A strategic planning tool used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats regarding a topic or place.</p> <p>The Open University have a free course on writing a SWOT analysis.</p>	<p>Workshop</p> <p>Community Forums</p> <p>School or youth group sessions</p>
Online polling software	<p>Applications available online such as Mentimeter can be a fun and interactive way to present ideas and gather feedback,</p> <p>Mentimeter specifically is designed to make presentations more dynamic and engaging by allowing participants to contribute their input via their smartphones or other devices.</p> <p>Microsoft Teams also includes options for polling.</p>	<p>Workshops</p> <p>Online workshops</p>
Online whiteboards	<p>Online whiteboards such as Miro or Mural can be a good addition to an online workshop. Participants can treat it like piece of flipchart or a board and be invited to add ideas on the subjects being discussed.</p> <p>It is worth bearing in mind that sometimes these online tools can be tricky to use for participants who are not digitally confident.</p>	<p>Workshops</p> <p>Online Workshops</p>

Here is a range of forums where you might consider employing the above techniques.

Where	Detail
Posters and leaflets	Posters and leaflets can be a great way to promote your engagement but also advertise opportunities to get involved.

	<p>For example, you might want to link to a survey that is open and invite people to participate that way.</p> <p>You can find more information on using printed materials from Community Councils Scotland.</p>
Coffee and chat	<p>If a local establishment is happy, you could occupy a table for an afternoon and invite people to pop in and have a chat about what you are doing community engagement on.</p>
Events	<p>A stall or stand at a community event is a good way to have brief, one to one or small group interactions with community members. Keep in mind what it is you want to focus on (for example a stand at an event where people come from all over the country might not be best if you are looking to speak to people from a specific area).</p> <p>You can learn more about organising a voluntary event from the UK Government guide.</p>
Walk and talks	<p>Small group walks are useful for experiencing and getting feedback on a place in real time. Consider how best to capture your notes as it can be hard to do while you are walking. Also, it is useful to be clear in your mind about what you want to get from your conversations so you can keep your interactions focused.</p>
On street engagement	<p>Approaching people while they are out and about is a great way to capture a diverse range of voices. Leaflets about the engagement are a helpful tool to share the purpose of the exercise. A clipboard to note answers to your core questions is helpful to capture feedback from those who stop.</p>
Public Meetings	<p>As a community council, you will be holding meetings which are open to the public. These are great opportunities to share information and receive feedback.</p> <p>It can be useful to think about how we can make these forums more comfortable to people who are unfamiliar with them so that they can participate effectively (see facilitation skills underneath).</p>
Group workshops – Go to them	<p>Often you can contact groups who meet regularly and ask if you can run a workshop during the time they are meeting. This often works well for engaging with schools and youth groups. By going to a group yourself, participants are not having to go</p>

	<p>out of their normal routine and are often in a space and around people who they are more comfortable with.</p> <p>You can learn more about presenting to groups in this resource from HIS.</p>
Group workshops – Come to us	<p>Alternatively, to the above, you can host a workshop and invite participants to attend themselves. This can allow you more control over how you set up the space, however sometimes it can be tricky to generate participation from a diverse range of people.</p>
Exhibitions	<p>Boards giving information and/or asking for feedback could be set up over a number of days in a suitable community location. These types of exhibitions could be fully/partially manned or unmanned.</p> <p>Check out this resource on display and exhibitions from HIS for more information.</p>
Social media	<p>Using social media sites can be an effective way to promote engagement opportunities, encourage feedback, and increase participation in other engagement activities like an online survey. It is worth having a strategy as to how to manage conversations which might come up in the comments section.</p> <p>Check out this social media guide for community councillors developed by the National Communications Advisory Group (Scotland), the Improvement Service, and freelance communications specialist Dan Slee HIS also includes a resource on Facebook groups.</p>
Online workshops	<p>Related to the above forums, it can be good to offer opportunities for people to meet with you online. Group sessions can be hosted using software such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom.</p> <p>Check out this resource on online meetings from HIS for more information.</p>

For even more ways to do engagement you can [read about methods and techniques for co-production](#) from the Scottish Co-Production Network.

Facilitation Tips

Facilitation is the process of guiding and supporting a group to achieve a common goal by creating a structured, inclusive, and collaborative environment. Developing

facilitation skills can be valuable in supporting a diverse range of voices to be heard and understood.

- Be clear on the aims – Keep people informed as to the intention of the exercise and why you are working with them. This will help keep both yourself and the participants on track.
- Be impartial – We understand that you might feel passionately about a subject you are engaging on. However, if you are interested in getting the community members' viewpoints, it is important that during your interactions with them you remain impartial and stay interested in their own experiences and ideas.
- Create a welcoming space – Whether you are engaging with people in a workshop or on the street, you will find you get the best out of people if you are friendly and welcoming. Let people know your name, what you are doing, and that you are interested in their views. Keep the language simple and straightforward.
- Use group guidelines – This can be created as a group or presented as options at the start of a meeting. Sometimes group guidelines include suggestions like 'respect other perspectives', 'be mindful of your airtime' (here airtime means how much someone is talking), and 'start and finish on time'. There might be other recommendations that can be made to support your process.
- Keep to time – We know it can be easy for time to run away when we are enthusiastic about something. However, it is important to be aware of and keep to time when hosting a meeting, workshop, or conversation. It will help you cover all the points that you need to within your session while respecting people's time and energy levels.
- Take breaks – Meaningfully taking part in meetings can take a lot of energy. It is important to schedule in breaks to your meetings so people can come back refreshed and comfortable.
- Follow up – How are people going to continue to stay involved in your community engagement or find out the results of it? You might think it's suitable to collect email addresses and (with people's consent) email them about the outcome of an engagement exercise.

[Find out more about effective facilitation](#) from the Scottish Co-Production Network.

Resolving Conflicts

It is normal for differences in opinion and experience to arise while talking about community issues. Often, these issues are very important to people and sometimes disagreements, conflicts, and criticism can emerge. This isn't necessarily a negative thing – it is good that people share the diversity of their experience, and this can result in more inclusive and effective solutions. However, we understand that navigating these situations can be challenging. Here are some tips you might find helpful when managing conflict.

- Stay calm. Conflict is normal and can often be useful in raising issues and building relationships.
- Create a meeting environment where people feel comfortable sharing by using the facilitation tips above.
- Use your group guidelines. They can be a useful tool to remind everyone of the etiquette and expectations which were outlined at the start of a meeting.
- Take a break. A pause in a meeting or conversation to regroup and calm down can be very useful. It can also give you an opportunity to think about how to approach the issue.
- Apply active listening. Listening with an open mind and looking to fully understand what the other person is saying can really help to take the heat out of a conversation. Make eye contact and demonstrate that you are engaged in what the other person is saying. It can also be helpful to paraphrase and summarise what you are hearing to check that you are understanding it correctly.
- Focus on the problem, not the person. If a conflict begins to focus on personal characteristics, redirect the focus back to the issue at hand.
- Look for a win-win solution. Aim to identify common ground and what concerns participants share. When looking for solutions be creative and see where there is acceptable compromise.

[Learn more about how to navigate conflict](#) from the Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution. You can also check out this free course from the Open University on [Difference and challenge in teams](#).

Accessibility and Inclusion

It is important to consider how you can make your community engagement activity accessible and inclusive to ensure that the views you gather are truly representative of your community. For example, you may want to think about what groups are more likely to engage digitally or how to design a poster that is easy to understand. If you are hosting your own workshop, think about how people can travel there, how wheelchair users can get in, where there are toilets, and when you might take breaks.

For more information on how to make your engagement activities accessible and inclusive you can check out this [Inclusive Community Engagement guide from the Sensory Trust](#) or this [Accessible and Inclusive Events Guide from NCPPE](#).

Evaluation and impact

It is useful to evaluate your activity at different points. For example, a quick evaluation half-way through can allow you to adapt your approach to ensure that it is

relevant and effective. You will also want to assess the impact of the engagement once it is complete and use what you have learned to improve future community engagement.

You can do this in simpler or more detailed ways. For example, you might want to have a meeting with your group and explore:

- Did you achieve your aims?
- What went well?
- What could have gone better?
- What should you do differently in the future?

Record your notes in a place where you can use them in the future.

[Evaluation Support Scotland](#) works with third sector organisations to measure and explain their impact. Have a look at their website for an [introduction to evaluation](#), overview of the [evaluation pathway](#), [approaches to evaluation](#), and other resources including case studies.

If you decide to use the [VOiCE software](#) to plan your engagement, it has a review section with self-evaluation questions that help assess the community engagement process, what worked, what issues arose and captures some of the learning points from the process.

It is also valuable to self-evaluate your community council, to understand what you are doing well and what you can do better. Education Scotland has developed [How Good is Our Third Sector Organisation](#), an evaluation resource to help with just that.

Expressing your views

Some of the community engagement that you do will help set the priorities for your community council. However, often it is appropriate to forward this information to the relevant public authority. As outlined in the Local Government (Scotland) Act, community councils shall “express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable.”

According to Edinburgh’s [Scheme for Community Councils](#) “Community councils may make representations to the City of Edinburgh Council and other public and private agencies on matters for which they are responsible and which the community council considers to be of local interest. Representations in the case of statutory objections, such as planning or licensing matters should be made to the appropriate City of Edinburgh Council officer. On issues where a City of Edinburgh Council directorate/service area is consulting with community councils, representations

should be made to the appropriate council officer.”

You may find it helpful to understand [how the Council makes decisions](#). Decisions can be made in two ways, by officers, or by councillors. Below you will find information on some of the ways you can feed back to officers and councillors.

Officers

- [City of Edinburgh Council Contact Webpage](#)
- [The Community Council Guidance document](#) includes other helpful City of Edinburgh Council contact information.
- Consultations- ongoing consultation and engagement activities can be found on the [City of Edinburgh Council Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

Councillors

- Read this [guide on how committees work](#) to understand how decisions are made in committees.
 - For more information on the remit of each Council and Committee, you can read the [Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Functions](#)
- Get in touch with [your local councillors](#)
- Stay up to date on [Council and Committee business](#).
- [Speak at a Council or Committee meeting](#)
 - Contact committee.services@edinburgh.gov.uk to request a deputation.

Now over to you

We hope you have found the information and methods in this toolkit interesting and useful, and that you feel more prepared to take forward these skills in your day-to-day work as a community councillor.

Remember that community engagement is adaptable. This is your opportunity to think about your community and consider what avenues, groups/networks, and spaces already exist that will help you to carry out locally targeted community engagement. You may want to reach out to other community councils operating nearby, after all, they will have a good understanding of the local context and may have skills or experience they can share. Be creative and have fun! Learning from others and making a difference is what this is all about.

In the final sections of this toolkit, we have included a variety of helpful links and resources on community engagement and related topics that you may wish to look into a bit further.

Resources

Community Engagement Case Studies

Below are some links to examples of good practice relating to community engagement. Perhaps you can see some techniques that would work well for your community council.

- Check out this video describing how Pollokshields Community Council have engaged with a diverse population in Glasgow:
<https://www.communitycouncils.scot/ideas/community-engagement/face-to-face>
- Scalloway Community Council, Shetland shares tips from their engagement to develop a local place plan:
<https://www.communitycouncils.scot/ideas/community-engagement/five-ways-to-engage-the-community-in-consultations>
- The Scottish Co-production Network shares case studies for each stage of the co-production journey, from starting out to applying new knowledge:
<https://www.coproductionscotland.org.uk/case-studies>
- The town of Darvel in East Ayrshire has used a town lottery to raise funds and get residents more interested in town affairs:
<https://www.communitycouncils.scot/ideas/community-engagement/darvel-community-lottery>

Community Engagement Training Opportunities

[The Scottish Community Development Centre](#) offers a variety of helpful trainings to help build confidence and knowledge of strong community engagement practice.

You may be interested in:

- Community engagement de-mystified: This introductory training explores the principles, standards, processes and methods that underpin good practice in community engagement.
<https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/training/community-engagement-de-mystified>
- Voice, an online tool for community engagement: training and support in the use of VOiCE online software.
<https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/training/voice-online-tool-community-engagement>
- Doing 'with' not 'to' – an introduction to co-production
<https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/training/doing-not-introduction-co-production>
- Building Stronger Communities
<https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/training/building-stronger-communities-skills-assessing-com>

Many of these trainings will have a cost attached. We encourage you to ask about discounted rates for charities, and to consider how you might come together with other community councils or community groups to pool resources or apply for a grant.

Other Helpful Resources

- ★ Resources that we think are particularly helpful and relevant for community councils, we have marked with a star.

Evaluation Support Scotland

Their website includes a variety of information and resources for measuring and explaining impact.

<https://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/>

Healthcare Improvement Scotland

While [HIS](#) has a health and care focus, there are still a variety of tools that may be useful to your work, for example:

Engaging Communities <https://www.hisengage.scot/engaging-communities/>

Potential barriers to engagement <https://www.hisengage.scot/service-change/resources/potential-barriers-to-engagement/>

Participation Toolkit: <https://www.hisengage.scot/engaging-communities/participation-toolkit/>

Equality and Diversity <https://www.hisengage.scot/equipping-professionals/equality-and-diversity/>

★ **The Improvement Service**

The Improvement Service manages the [Scottish Community Councils project](#), which runs the [Scottish Community Councils Website](#) (more information under Scottish Community Councils, below), a [Facebook](#) and [X account](#), and a [Knowledge Hub Group](#).

The Knowledge Hub group is “a friendly group aimed at enabling community councillors to share questions, ideas, and good practice about running a community

council. The group is open to anyone with an interest in community councils.”

<https://khub.net/web/scottish-community-councillors-online>

Iriss (The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services)

You may want to look at Iriss’s Co-production Project Planner, a resource that includes specific tools for planning and carrying out co-production projects.

<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/tools/co-production-project-planner>

Open University

The Improvement Service and the Open University (OU) in Scotland have put together a selection of free online courses intended to help upskill and reskill community council volunteers. This includes courses related to digital skills, business skills, finance and fundraising, and community and society.

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/skills-supportOU-CC>

The Open University also offers a range of other free courses via OpenLearn that you may wish to consider for other areas you are interested in.

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/>

Participation handbook- Scottish Government

This handbook provides a guide to good practice in participation work across Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/participation-handbook/>

Planning Aid Scotland

A charity and social enterprise that helps people navigate the planning system, which may be useful if you plan to engage on topics related to planning.

<https://www.pas.org.uk/>

★ Scottish Community Councils

This website is managed by the Improvement Services on behalf of the Scottish Government, and provides information and resources specifically aimed at Scottish Community Councils. Some of this information we have already referred to earlier in this toolkit.

You may want to look at their page on digital media, which includes tips and examples for using videos to engage with the community, online meeting tools, building a website, and data mapping.

<https://www.communitycouncils.scot/ideas/using-digital-media>

They also have a whole section on ideas which includes practical guidance and case studies that may inspire your work.

<https://www.communitycouncils.scot/ideas>

★ **Scottish Community Development Centre**

We have referred to this website in several places throughout this toolkit, as they have a wealth of information related to community development and community engagement. Besides their [community engagement page](#) and [trainings](#), you may also want to check out the following resources.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act

<https://www.scdc.org.uk/hub/community-empowerment-act>

Local Place Plans: A guide for communities <https://www.scdc.org.uk/local-place-plans>

Building Stronger Community Organisations, an online learning resource for community groups. This resource was produced by the Scottish Refugee Council with support from SCDC. We included a link previously to [Module 3: Finding out the needs of your community](#), but we highly recommend taking some time to go through the other modules which include information on things like showing how you've made a difference, getting funding, running services and events, and participating and campaigning, just to name a few.

<https://www.scdc.org.uk/bsco>

Scottish Co-Production Network

The Scottish Co-Production Network includes a variety of information on their website on co-production. Co-production is a form of community engagement that involves communities in decision-making.

<https://www.coproductionscotland.org.uk/>

They have even created a Co-Production Guide to help people do co-production better and embed these processes in their organisations.

<https://www.coproductionscotland.org.uk/guide>

SCVO (The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)

[SCVO](https://scvo.scot/) is the national membership organisation for the voluntary sector with a mission to support, promote, and develop a confident, sustainable voluntary sector in Scotland. We recommend having a look through their website as it holds a range of valuable information and resources. <https://scvo.scot/>

You may want to look at the following resources.

Digital media- includes trainings and how to guides. <https://scvo.scot/support/digital>

Events and training- sign up for upcoming trainings on things like data protection, budgeting, and social media. <https://scvo.scot/events-training>

SCOPE e-Learning platform- includes modules on Governance, Financial, Fundraising, Communications, and Risk Management.
<https://scvo.scot/support/elearning/scope>

Scottish Tech Army

The Scottish Tech Army may be able to support if you are looking for technology solutions to real world problems. For example, they helped develop a website for Morningside Community Council. <https://www.scottishtecharmy.org/>

**For more information about
this toolkit contact:**

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