



# CHANGE TOOLKIT

## Tool: Consultation Guidance

Used in:  
**GAIN ENTRY**  
**FACT FIND**  
Also good for:  
**SELECT BEST OPTION**  
**TEST**

### What is it?

Consultation and engagement involves asking people what they think about a particular issue, product or service. It can take a variety of forms, for example: postal, telephone, on-line or face-to-face surveys, in-depth interviews, focus groups or panels.

But it doesn't end there. The purpose of consultation can be to inform decision making, to inform, involve or empower people. You will need to be prepared not only to collect information, but also to analyse it and make use of it.

Consultation can be used to engage with both internal and external stakeholders. It is worth remembering that in consulting with stakeholders, you are also communicating with them.

### Why use it in a change process?

It is likely that you will use consultation and engagement throughout the nine stages of change to establish how various stakeholders are feeling at different points in the change.

You can use consultation and engagement to understand levels of stakeholder understanding and awareness of what you're doing. This is especially useful in the **Gain Entry / Fact Find** stage of the change curve.

You might also use consultation and engagement to find out how people feel about the different alternatives of the change during **Select Best Option** stage.

You can also use consultation and engagement in the **Test** stage of the change curve to find out more about how stakeholders are feeling as the change or changes are implemented. Are things working as anticipated? What feedback do people have for you? Consultation can be used to test out ideas and assess how they are likely to be received.

### What do I need to do?

1. In order for the results of your consultation and engagement activity to be useful, it is important to agree clear aims and plan objectives carefully – what do you need to know and why.
2. When you have completed your consultation and engagement activity, you will need to analyse the results and ensure you make the best use of them, measure this against your objectives.
3. Don't forget to advise the people you have consulted what the results were and how you have used them.
4. Finally, it may be worth evaluating the consultation and engagement process to establish lessons learned that could enable you, or your colleagues, to improve the process in future.

### My Notes