

## Top Tips for Even Better Partnership Board Meetings

## Top Tips For Even Better Local Partnership Board Meetings



**'Reps on Board' is a joint-funded project between Derbyshire County Council and MacIntyre.**

**Alison Wright and Martin Averill work on the project.**



**The project works with people with a learning disability who have been voted to be the 'Elected Reps' on Partnership Boards across Derbyshire.**

**We train and support people to help them to be good, active 'Reps'.**



**In 2007, Derbyshire changed from one large County Partnership Board to 6 new Local Partnership Boards plus a County Partnership Board.**

**This has been a big challenge for local areas. They have each set up brand new Partnership Boards.**

## **Our Top Tips!**



**Reps on Board have talked to many people who go to Partnership Board meetings.**

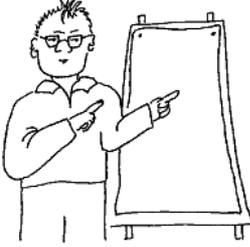
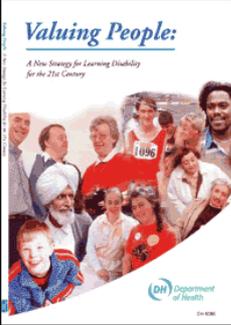
**We have found out what is working and what is not working to make their meetings easy for everyone to join in.**

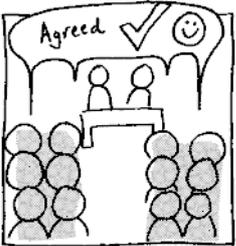
**We have put together this 'Top Tips for Even Better Partnership Board Meetings' to help Partnership Boards to look at how their meetings are held.**

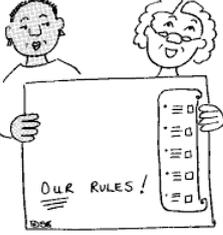
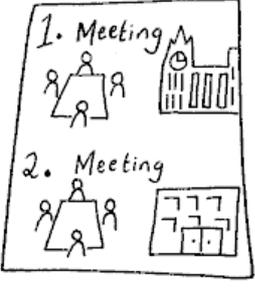
**Take a look at our Top Tips and see if you can make your meetings easier for everyone to join in.**

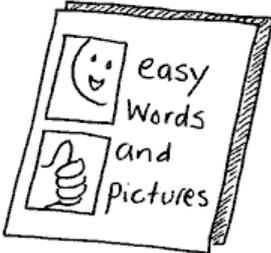
# Top Tips for Even Better Partnership Board Meetings

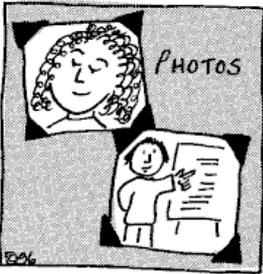
		We do this	We want to do this
	<p>Have a good mix of people at your meetings. People who can bring useful experience to Partnership Boards may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who use services</li> <li>• Family carers</li> <li>• Commissioners</li> <li>• Area service managers</li> <li>• Advocacy workers</li> <li>• Social workers</li> <li>• Health workers</li> <li>• Employment services</li> <li>• Housing services</li> <li>• Transitions workers</li> <li>• Voluntary sector workers</li> <li>• Independent providers</li> <li>• Leisure services</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Transport people</li> <li>• Business people</li> </ul>		
	<p>Invite people from black and ethnic minorities onto your Partnership Board.</p>		

		We do this	We want to do this
	<p><b>Call 'experts' in when you need them.</b></p> <p><b>Don't expect them to come to every meeting.</b></p> <p><b>You might need to get a better understanding of how they work.</b></p> <p><b>You may also wish to give them your message or discuss your ideas.</b></p> <p><b>You can then see how you can work together to make things work better in your area.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Partnership Boards aim to bring about the things talked about in the Valuing People White Paper.</b></p> <p><b>Make sure that everyone on your Partnership Board knows about the aims of Valuing People and Valuing People Now.</b></p>		

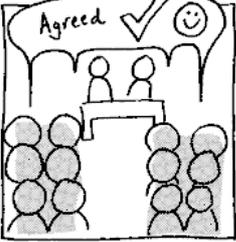
		We do this	We want to do this
	<p>Have a local 'Path Day' to work out what your Partnership Board's priorities are.</p> <p>Make a clear list of what you want to change.</p> <p>A year later, check your list again to see how well you have done. You can then work out what you need to do next.</p>		
	<p>Make sure each Elected Rep has the right support. This may mean lifts to the meeting and/or support during and after the meeting.</p> <p>Reps on Board have made a Photo Story about Reps support needs.</p> <p>Support needs do change; so remember to keep checking that the support set up still meets the person's needs.</p>		
	<p>Have 2 Co-Chairs. Involve Carers and Elected Reps in this role.</p> <p>Make sure they have full secretarial support and help to send out agendas and notes of meetings.</p>		

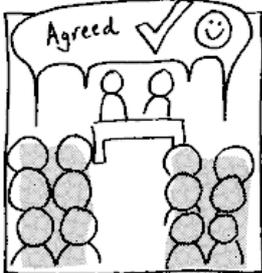
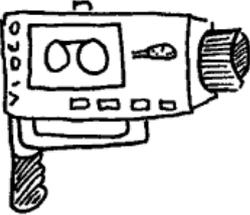
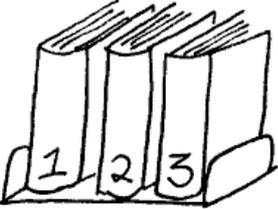
		We do this	We want to do this
	<p><b>Make sure people know and understand the ground rules. These may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen and respect each others views</li> <li>• Give everyone a chance to talk and be heard – red and green cards can help with this</li> <li>• One person to talk at any one time</li> <li>• Telephones on silent</li> <li>• No Jargon (big words)</li> <li>• Use full words –e.g. Learning Disability Development Fund instead of LDDF</li> </ul>		
	<p><b>If your Partnership Board has new people, ask the group if they wish to wear name badges or have photo badges.</b></p> <p><b>Make these easy to read from a distance.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Try to plan the agenda together.</b></p> <p><b>Make sure everyone knows the agenda well before the meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Don't try to cover too much in one meeting.</b></p>		

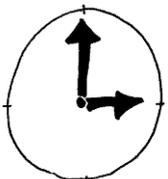
		We do this	We want to do this
	<p><b>Put breaks on the agenda! No one can concentrate for much longer than an hour at a time.</b></p> <p><b>Breaks are a very useful part of a meeting. They allow us time to stretch, think, meet each other, and get to feel part of the group.</b></p> <p><b>A group gels and works better after a break so make use of them.</b></p>		
	<p><b>All notes should be accessible. This means using simple words and adding pictures/photographs</b></p> <p><b>Ask the group which kind of pictures they would like to use.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Make sure everyone gets a copy of the notes from the meetings. Check to see if people prefer their notes to be posted or e-mailed.</b></p> <p><b>Have extra copies of the notes of the previous meeting to give out on the day.</b></p> <p><b>See if people need notes in another format, like on tape.</b></p>		

		We do this	We want to do this
	<p>Use red and green cards to give everyone a chance to stop the meeting, speak or ask a question.</p>		
	<p>Some people have difficulty writing, so make sign-in sheets easy to use.</p> <p>You could have a photo of each person from your Partnership Board on a sheet and ask them to tick next to their picture.</p> <p>Leave space at the bottom for visitors to add their details.</p>		
	<p>Add peoples contact details/photos to notes.</p> <p>Make sure that people are happy to share these first.</p>		
	<p>Meet in a place that is accessible.</p> <p>Try to meet at a community building away from services if possible.</p>		

		We do this	We want to do this
	<p><b>Make sure everyone can sit at a table.</b></p> <p><b>If the group is very big, have some small tables for people to sit around, rather than one very long rectangle.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Introduce new people to someone in the group who can be their mentor until they settle in.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Make sure each person is welcomed and is offered a drink.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Have water available on the table so people can help themselves during the meeting.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Remember Derbyshire's 'Don't be a Couch Potato' campaign and consider having fruit available at the table.</b></p>		

		We do this	We want to do this
	<p><b>Ask people to introduce themselves clearly and slowly.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Ask people to avoid using big words. No jargon!</b></p>		
	<p><b>Don't try to do too much in one meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Focus on themes and agree what you want to change or do.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Give people a chance to have a say over some of the money that is spent on learning disability services.</b></p> <p><b>e.g. Learning Disability Development Funding</b></p>		
	<p><b>Don't just talk – agree actions and who is going to do the task.</b></p> <p><b>Have a clear action plan at the end of the meeting and check these have been followed up when you next meet.</b></p>		

		We do this	We want to do this
	<p>Those who speak loudest and longest often get their own way so take votes to make it fair to all.</p>		
	<p>Make time to explain things. Check that everyone understands.</p>		
	<p>Be creative. Use pictures, PowerPoint, photographs, videos and Photo Stories wherever possible. Split into smaller discussion groups. Don't just talk – show and involve!</p>		
	<p>Offer each regular member a folder to keep his or her Partnership Board notes in. This will help people to be more organised and bring their notes to meetings. Have a hole punch available.</p>		

		We do this	We want to do this
	<p>Agree which coloured paper you will use for your meeting notes/agenda.</p> <p>Black print on yellow can be easier to see if you are visually impaired.</p> <p>Coloured paper will also help people to identify which meeting these notes are for.</p>		
	<p>Give guidance notes to speakers so they know what you expect from them.</p> <p>You can find a copy of these on the Derbyshire Local Partnership Board website pages. Service Managers also have a copy.</p>		
	<p>The following website has information about accessible meetings with hints/tips and links:  <a href="http://www.castanet.org.uk">www.castanet.org.uk</a></p>		
	<p>Finish on time!</p> <p>Make sure everyone has the dates of further meetings well in advance.</p>		

		We do this	We want to do this
	<p>Every year, take time out to look at what you have achieved or changed in the last year – and make your plans for change for the next year.</p>		
	<p>Give new people training and/or information to help them to take part in their Partnership Board.</p> <p>Elected Reps in Derbyshire have a training programme and development days to give them the information and the skills they need to do their job.</p>		

Try some of these tips to make your Partnership Board meetings easier for everyone to take part.

Good luck!

Let us know how these Top Tips have helped and share your own Tips with us.

Thanks to CHANGE Picture Bank Pictures and to everyone at Partnership Boards across Derbyshire who helped us to make this Top Tips Toolkit.

**Have you got more Top Tips? Please get in touch with us:**



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**June 2008**

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