

## Recommendations from meeting 21-10-09

The following recommendations have been made after the 'Ways of listening' workshop held 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009 in Exeter and were drawn from the views and opinions of those who attended.

These were summarised onto flipcharts and can be found in Appendix 1.

Further context is drawn from the national MENE Project and the Shared Outcomes Agreement (June 2009).

The following six recommendations have been formulated to initiate an outcome to this workshop, with the view that the partners of the steering group will action as seen fit and take forward. This input has been donated by the Eden Project and Sensory Trust.

### 1. Reasons for the research

There is a real desire/ drive for getting the right set of questions that can be used across all sites. These questions have to be consistent – concise. It is recognised by the group that there is a need for sharing good practice and a desire to not re-invent the wheel.

There is a need for sufficient robust local data and a need for input from local user groups.

This would help in providing evidence and supporting data, which can help in secure of funding. The evidence gained would be user led rather than organisation led.

All partners actually have a responsibility to monitor and report back to the other stakeholders.

This will all help in feeding into other surveys and other work within the partnership.

### 2. Coordinated approach

It is clear from the workshop that one of the key things missing is the coordination of activity/research. The workshop also identified the need for consistency in methodology, the collation of this data, and finally the coordination of the dissemination and its' practical application.

To avoid repetition, as there is a great deal happening at a national regional and local level, there is a need to provide efficient and effective use of this data and for this to be coordinated amongst groups.

### 3. Question options:

It was identified by the group that the main driver for the questions is based around...

Who are the visitors? Where do they come from? Why do they visit? What barriers are there to access? What do visitors want to do? And understanding their needs.

Where are they? Can anything be done/improve the experience, access, and numbers?

It was also identified that there is this national overarching survey, which will provide a reference point to any data collected at the local level. It is strongly recommended that this framework should be used to provide those foundation questions, and therefore any data collected at the local level can feed into this national picture of what is going on. This survey will also provide context which will allow the group to achieve recommendations raised in point 2 (drawing and feeding into this important National Survey) as well as provide continuity of data.

### 4. Requirements – accessibility

It is strongly recommended that surveys are carried out both on-site and off-site, with local communities and disability groups, to ensure that we reach as much of the potential audience as possible and to provide more comprehensive and all-inclusive results from the

survey. This will mean ensuring that the survey is provided in formats that allow people with sensory impairments, communication difficulties, learning disabilities, mental health issues and people for whom English is not their first language to be included.

Formats that help to achieve this are:

- Text in large print and Easy English
- Printed pictorial symbols (e.g. Widgit)
- web-based survey (to include large print text with Widgit Symbols and be readable by screenreader software for users with visual impairments)
- text provided in languages other than English

As for engaging people off-site, this can be achieved in several ways. Some of which will need the involvement of volunteers who would be able to spend time visiting groups that may be unable to travel to site locations either through travel or financial barriers, time constraints or as a result of a physical impairment or mental health issue.

The following engagement techniques will help to reach more people in the community:

- Postal surveys to local schools, community, youth, disability and older persons groups; alternatively arrange visits to group meetings/events if it is more convenient
- Telephone interviews with organisations/individuals that organise and facilitate day visits to outdoor locations for people with disabilities (e.g. Age Concern, carers forums, Residential care homes)
- Distribute the survey through local 'talking' newsletters that produce information for people with visual impairments
- Provide a web-based survey (there will be a cost involved in engaging Widgit Symbols to help produce the on-line survey) Collaboration

Collaboration is central to the aims of this group. There is a desire to share, to learn from others and that collectively we can do more as group than as individuals. So the importance of sharing each other's data is integral to the working of this project. The signing of the Shared Outcomes Agreement (June 2009) formalises this professional desire and that this sharing of data adds weight to the research, raises credibility and can help in the arena of grant applications.

5. It is vital that this project is appropriately resourced. And it is strongly recommended that funding is sought to support both data collation and coordination of the work, collation and dissemination of the findings?

It is important that we look into ways that can take us beyond gathering the required information. We are at the first step, but we need to take a longer view and the next step has to be seen as funding issue. It is recommended that the group prioritise this area and decide who is going to coordinate this.

There is also opportunity to explore at this early stage joint applications for funding. It is envisaged that the likely costs will be collation of data, analysis of data, intelligent and practically applicable and appropriate interpretation of the data. And it is strongly recommended that the funding must cover dissemination (an often overlooked aspect of the research process). We therefore would require resource help in achieving this as well as help in and coordination of funding applications.