



ENGAGEMENT, INSIGHTS AND COPRODUCTION

Supporting you to have quality conversations for effective collaboration, coproduction and strategic planning.

Why commission engagement, insights and coproduction support?

It's widely accepted that public sector organisations do better when they work in partnership with communities and stakeholders. Actively engaging with people and understanding their views is a first step towards active collaboration, co-production and shared decision making.

Lots of public sector organisations already do surveys, have consultation forums and ways to communicate with communities. But sometimes it's useful to commission a skilled independent partner when:

- You're facing knotty issues and have to balance many different viewpoints.
- There's been tensions or disagreements and neutrality is called for.
- You're reaching out to communities who are reluctant to talk openly to organisations they see as part of the state.
- You recognise you don't have the expertise in-house.

We call our engagement, insights and coproduction support [The Big Conversation](#).

The approach

During a Big Conversation we will analyse the strategic context, talk to key partners and to communities to gather both quantitative data and qualitative insights.

Our community research methods enable us to hear from quieter voices and diverse communities.

In the past we've engaged effectively with people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, the deaf community and many communities with English as a second language.

We will then summarise the outcomes, present the findings, make recommendations, and coproduce a plan of action. We can also produce a public-facing summary, including in easy-read formats.

It's worth thinking about:

- **Before a Big Conversation** - do you need support to analyse the data you already have or to agree what questions you really need to ask?
- **After a Big Conversation** - do you need support to take forward actions and embed change in strategies and commissioning models?

How we will work with you

We will start with understanding the context and problems you're trying to solve, so we can develop an approach that will suit your specific needs and budget.

Big Conversations usually take 3-6 months, but it very much depends on the scope and how many people you want to involve, and how. We work on a day rate so can always give an accurate projection of costs. If you have a fixed budget, we can tell you what's possible for that amount.

We work both remotely and in-person, depending on the project stage and tasks and what works best for the people and communities you are seeking to involve.

One of the key issues for us to discuss and agree upon is the use and control of personal data.

What are the outcomes?

We know from experience that the outcomes from engagement, insights and coproduction can be:

- Commissioning organisations feel more informed and confident to move forward with actions.
- Communities and stakeholders feel more involved and listened to.
- Participants in group discussions appreciate meeting others and hearing their experience.

What working together needs from you

To make a **Big Conversation** successful, commissioning organisations need to consider five things:

- **Sufficient time** – to build clarity, trust and to reach those communities least frequently heard.
- **Clear leadership** – a single point of contact is most helpful for decision making (especially when we are working to a consortium or partnership of commissioning organisations).
- **Communications and recruitment support** – to explain overall purpose and to publicise surveys, events and to recruit participants.
- **Events/workshops** – if we are bringing people together, management of attendance is needed, and resources for venues and refreshments for in-person events.
- **Budget for participation** – to involve everyone in events/workshops, needs such as transport, interpreting and extra care costs must be considered.

Quality assurance

To quality-assure our **Big Conversation** work we:

- Build relationships and a shared brief with commissioners.
- Form a Big Conversation project group of staff responsible for the work – headed by a Community Catalysts Director.
- Nominate our CEO as overall quality controller.
- Set out clearly which communities we aim to involve and how we will do that.
- Have all survey and workshop questions checked for ambiguity and bias by others outside of the project group.
- Communicate well and sense-check emerging findings; benchmarking those to other Big Conversations we've run.

To extend the legacy of a Big Conversation we're always interested in:

- How we can work alongside people with lived experience as co-researchers - coaching and growing their understanding and confidence in engagement and insight gathering processes.
- How we can build structures and ways for people who have engaged to stay involved as experts in their own lived experience.

Our track record

We've been commissioned by several councils to lead a Big Conversation. Examples include:

- [A partnership with Our Voice and Nottinghamshire County Council](#). The Big Conversation informed the creation of the council's [adult social care strategy](#).
- [A partnership with Bolton Council](#). The Big Conversation led to a reframing of their services known as [Life Opportunities](#).

Contact us

To talk to us about a Big Conversation contact:

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