



Communications Best Value 2 Fitness Review

1. How fit for purpose are your communications?

2. Do they fully address the management of your council's reputation with all of your stakeholders?

3. Do you gather the views of citizens and service users in a way that convinces them it's worthwhile to participate in your consultations?

4. Are all departments communicating the key messages consistently and in a joined-up way?

5. Are your senior people fully equipped to communicate your council's vision for service improvement?

6. What about your communications approach: does it need to change or improve in order to help deliver the critical elements of your single outcome agreement?

It's no longer enough to just be good at keeping people informed. It's not acceptable to just "tell and sell". Best Value 2 is placing ever more emphasis on good partnership working being a key factor in a council's ability to demonstrate effective community leadership. It stresses that affected communities must be involved in a meaningful and representative manner as full partners in developing and delivering the vision for their area or service. In the wake of the Crerar Review, Ministers have accepted recommendations that the needs and priorities of service users and the public must be the prime consideration in all external scrutiny. All service providers will have to show that they meaningfully involve people who use services, carers, parents, guardians and tenants – as well as the public in their capacity as potential service users. Every council in Scotland will be affected as the "big five" regulators i.e. Audit Scotland, Care Commission, HMIE, Scottish Housing Regulator and the Social Work Inspection Agency, increasingly look for evidence of genuine service user and public involvement.

• Will your methods and systems stand up to close scrutiny across all services?

• Are the departments that are excellent at communicating and involving people sharing their knowledge to build capacity in other areas of service delivery?

Clear and consistent communications need to be at the heart of a council's efforts to improve its reputation for sound governance and best value.

How we can help

SOLACE Enterprises is offering a new service in Scotland which will help answer all of the above questions. We will provide you with a confidential "critical friend and mentor" review of your external communications and consultation approaches. We will establish your state of readiness for the increased focus of BV2 on how you involve communities and the public. Then we will make clear and practical recommendations designed to meet your future requirements and strengthen your reputation for quality, delivery and value for money.

The detail – we will

1. Review and analyse your statutory inspections (Best Value, SWIA, Education Inspections, Housing, Child Protection, Care Commission etc) examining what they state and recommend.
2. Research and review your corporate and external communications plans and any other overarching consultation or engagement frameworks.
3. Analyse existing stakeholder, consultation and customer research reports.





Communications Best Value 2 Fitness Review

4. Identify any emerging trends from analysis of the above. Then have initial discussions with the Chief Executive, Council leader and senior management to discuss their understanding of your communication objectives, priorities and shared vision for engagement with local communities.

5. Design practical steps and recommendations for improvement.

6. Present the final report and recommendations and, if required, a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure ongoing effectiveness.

Outcomes you can expect

We will produce a comprehensive report and executive summary with a set of clear recommendations.

Our experienced consultant

This work will be carried out by Sandra J Burke MCIM MCIPD DPA - an energetic, enthusiastic and award-winning marketer, who is widely regarded as one of Scotland's most able public sector communication professionals. She has a strong record of corporate communications success, working in social care regulation, economic development, further education, equality strategy and public sector

compliance. Sandra held senior positions directing communications, involvement, equality and brand management at the Care Commission and with Scottish Enterprise. She represented the Care Commission on the Scottish Government User Focus Action Group set up to advise Ministers on the recommendations in the Crerar Review and, until recently, was seconded part-time to the Scottish Government, to help develop the social and healthcare communication aspects of the Public Sector Reform Bill.

The cost of the service depends on the number of consultant days necessary and will be dictated by a mix of the documents and reports to be reviewed and the size and complexity of your operation. We anticipate that 7-10 days should be sufficient, but actual requirements will be agreed in advance depending on your needs. Our rates are considered to be extremely competitive for such a high quality service and offer excellent value for money.

For further information please contact the Resource Centre. You can either phone on **0845 601 0649** or email **resource.centre@solaceenterprises.com** To find out more about SOLACE Enterprises and our full range of consultancy services, visit **www.solaceenterprises.com**

