
Activity 1

An open space event to identify key issues

Purpose

- To gather ideas and views on themes for the strategy framework
- People to be able to participate easily and express their views
- You want people to learn from each other
- You want a session that is lively and fun

Who will be involved

- Parents who are not actively involved as well as parents who are part of representative bodies
- Teachers, support staff and senior managers
- Young people

The 'Open Space' Event

An open space event can be an excellent way for a wide range of staff and parents working together to explore good practice or identify issues. Open space events are best run with a minimum number of around 20 with the maximum about 100. Allocate people to groups before the event if possible.

In advance of the event participants identify the theme/s for discussion. A speaker is needed to lead the event. The leader opens the event by introducing the theme. The theme is then discussed in groups of between 4 and 10 people and participants identify issues. Delegates are not expected to 'represent' the views of their school or council; their individual views and ideas are what will count.

Example of a key theme

How do we work together to promote parental involvement to help children to do their best and be all they can be?

Issues for discussion

- What can schools do?
- What can parents do?
- What can others do?

Running the meeting

Participants are asked to:

- Identify their issues and ideas related to the theme
- Discuss their issue
- Identify causes and possible solution to problems/issues identified
- Prioritise three key action points to resolve the issues.

Outcomes

A report of the event is then prepared and shared with participants, the education authority, parents and the school. Actions agreed can then be used to advise development of the strategy.

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