

## **ES1 Develop, implement and evaluate a strategy for increasing electoral participation**

### **Unit Summary**

#### **What is the unit about?**

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on improving both the completeness of the electoral register and voting participation levels. Indeed, the EA Act 2006 introduces a new legal duty on ERO and RO roles in this regard. This unit describes the competences involved in taking a strategic approach to these complex and challenging areas of work. This includes reviewing past and current practice, researching the issues, and identifying and testing out potential solutions. To be successful, the strategy should have the support of key stakeholders, be innovative but realistic, and be properly monitored and evaluated.

#### **Who is the unit for?**

This unit is appropriate to the work of staff with a responsibility for encouraging participation in the democratic process.

#### **Links with other units**

This unit links with the following units:

- ES2 - Contribute to raising awareness about the electoral process
- ES19 - Establish, maintain and develop effective working relationships with stakeholders in electoral services
- F12 - Improve organisational performance

#### **Scope of the unit**

**Methods** for researching participation include:

- Surveys
- Focus groups/Citizen's Panels
- Canvassing

**Options** for increasing registration and voting include the use of:

- The media
- Events
- Outreach activities
- Educational activities
- Materials

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### **Outcomes of Effective Performance**

#### ***Developing and implementing a strategy***

*You must be able to:*

1. review past practice regarding increasing registration and voting, identify what worked well and what worked less well, and assess the reasons why
2. explore current best practice regarding increasing registration and voting, and identify factors that may be relevant to the development and implementation of an effective strategy
3. investigate issues with the electoral register concerning the under-representation of particular groups or geographic areas
4. use appropriate **methods** to identify which sections of the community do not participate in elections and the reasons why
5. identify and review the **options** for increasing registration and voting
6. explore the ways in which new and/or innovative approaches can be used to increase participation
7. identify and prioritise target audiences in accordance with national and local strategic aims and objectives
8. identify the messages that are likely to have the greatest impact on target audiences
9. determine realistic estimates of the time and resources required to deliver the strategy
10. identify and negotiate any partnership arrangements that may be beneficial in devising, funding and/or delivering the strategy
11. consult with colleagues and other relevant individuals/organisations regarding the strategy, making amendments where appropriate in the light of feedback received
12. communicate the final strategy effectively to all interested parties, ensuring that they fully understand their role in delivering the strategy
13. oversee the implementation of the strategy, obtaining feedback on progress from the relevant people at key stages

#### ***Evaluating the strategy***

*You must be able to:*

14. monitor the implementation of the strategy at suitable stages
15. evaluate the extent to which the strategy achieves that which was intended
16. review and revise the strategy in accordance with evaluation findings, and ensure that all interested parties are aware of the amendments

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### **Knowledge and understanding**

*You need to know and understand the following:*

#### **Legislation, policy and practice**

- K1. relevant legislation, codes of practice and guidance relating to increasing electoral participation
- K2. your organisational policies and procedures relating to increasing electoral participation
- K3. your role, responsibilities and authority relating to increasing electoral participation
- K4. the role, responsibility and authority of others relating to increasing electoral participation
- K5. relevant codes of practice relating to publicity

#### **Developing and implementing a strategy**

- K6. the importance of reviewing past practice and identifying the lessons to be learned
- K7. the importance of reviewing current best practice, and identifying ways in which it may impact on the development and implementation of the strategy
- K8. how to investigate issues of under-representation on the electoral register; the types of gaps that may occur e.g. different community groups, different age groups, the homeless, in different localities
- K9. how to identify which sections of the community do not participate in elections and the reasons why; the range of methods that can be used; the sensitivities involved in conducting such research
- K10. the range of options for increasing registration and voting e.g. media campaigns, use of materials, education, outreach, local democracy events; the strengths and drawbacks of each option
- K11. the importance of considering new and/or innovative approaches to increasing participation
- K12. how to identify and prioritise target audiences e.g. hard-to-reach groups; national and local strategic aims and objectives relating to identifying and prioritising target audiences
- K13. how to identify the messages that are likely to have the greatest impact on target audiences; the importance of matching the message to the audience
- K14. the impact of equality of opportunity and diversity issues regarding activities aimed at increasing registration and voting
- K15. the importance of determining realistic estimates of the time and resources (human, physical, financial) required to deliver the strategy
- K16. the range of potential partners with whom to engage in devising, funding and/or delivering the strategy e.g. Local Authorities, schools, community groups, political parties, NGOs
- K17. the importance of consulting with colleagues and others at the right time and in the right way regarding development of the strategy
- K18. how to communicate the final strategy effectively to all interested parties; the importance of ensuring that all parties fully understand their role in delivering the strategy
- K19. how to oversee the implementation of the strategy; the importance of obtaining feedback from the relevant people at key stages

#### **Evaluating the strategy**

- K20. how to monitor the implementation of the strategy; the appropriate stages at which to do this
- K21. how to evaluate the extent to which the strategy achieves what was intended; the difficulties typically associated with determining success/failure
- K22. the importance of adapting the strategy in accordance with evaluation findings, and how to communicate the changes to all interested parties