



# Case Study: Participatory Budgeting in Cheshire East



# Cheshire East Participatory Budgeting

As a method of engaging communities, Participatory Budgeting (PB) is growing in popularity. The beauty of PB is that it is very flexible, it can be used to focus on geographic areas or specific themes such as young people or the LGBT community.

Done properly, PB gives communities an opportunity to have a say on how money is spent on services within their area, but it should adhere to the of values and principles that ensure that it is a transparent process, focussing on the area or issues being addressed. The PB process can sometimes appear to be an overpowering process the first time it is used, but, as a delegate at the 2015 UK PB Network conference said "*get some expert advice in.*"

That is exactly what Cheshire East Council did. The Public Health department wanted to use PB to improve the health and wellbeing in eight areas. Wanting to make sure that they made the most of the opportunity, Cheshire East called upon MutualGain to help develop and deliver a training programme that would enable staff to deliver PB events across the area.

In order to maximise the learning opportunity, the eight areas combined and four one day training sessions were delivered by MutualGain. The bespoke training programme addressed the fundamental requirements of PB, but also focused on the necessity for the projects to be linked to the outcomes required.

The training programme received great feedback, with one delegate stopping the training in the morning, stating "*this is the best training programme that I have been on.*"

Following the training, the delegates planned their events, the first of which was delivered in Macclesfield in mid-October 2016. As PB events go, Susan Ritchie, the MD of MutualGain and current chair of the UK PB Network stated "*this is probably the best planned and delivered PB event that I have attended.*" That is praise indeed.

The second event took place in Crewe. A total of 98 votes were cast, with £120,000 being spent on 20 community health and wellbeing projects.

The remaining PB events are scheduled to be delivered in late Autumn 2016, the Macclesfield team demonstrated their ability to turn the training into reality and in doing so, set the bar high for others to follow.



No pressure then!

If you think Participatory Budgeting could be a useful tool for your organisation, why not choose MutualGain as your partner for delivering an event or scheme of work? From a one-off report for a specific consultation, or an overhaul of your current engagement activities, MutualGain has the experience and skill to deliver. For a no obligation discussion about your requirements, contact our Business Development Lead, Owen Miller:  
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Whatever your engagement needs, MutualGain has the skills and experience to help you achieve your goal, whether you want to upskill your staff, meet your statutory obligations on engaging communities, or involve the public in an important decision or behavioural change - we can help you in the following ways:

## Training

MutualGain provides a range of training for your employees and stakeholders, from one day courses to full capacity building packages which teach a number of different engagement techniques. All of our courses are highly customisable and we work with you to ensure your staff are learning the skills they need from people who have experience of carrying out these methods across the public and charitable sector.

Trainees rate our one day programmes at 5/5.

## Supported Learning and Delivery

Our supported learning and delivery programme goes beyond the one day training to building the capacity of staff or residents to deliver engagement and listen differently to those they serve.

Our extensive experience in event delivery, coaching and partnership working, combined with our training and support packages ensures that your staff feel confident in delivering engagement events and strategies. We work with you at every stage of the planning, delivery and analysis phases to reinforce your learning and pass on best practice.

Our capacity building programme was recently evaluated by Durham University to show that social capital built through strengths based approaches delivered by MutualGain reduces crime and ASB significantly.

Our associates have worked with a variety of NHS organisations, Police, Planners, and Central Government to support engagement and commissioning staff to establish new methods of engagement and integrate them within current working practices.

**Coming soon:** We have just been approved as a **'centre to deliver OCN qualifications and accredited courses'**, and are in the process of securing accreditation for our supported delivery programme of training and capacity building in social capital.

## Delivering your Engagement Activity for you

Don't have the time or the staff to deliver a meaningful engagement process? Our team is here to support you. We use the power of your local population to gain insight into current issues as well as areas of good practice so that you can make better, more informed decisions. From the popular technique of Participatory Budgeting to the broad learning opportunities found using the World Café method, MutualGain can deliver events and processes which will change your organisation and your stakeholders' perspectives on any 'problem'.

We'd love to talk to you about working with your organisation. For more information, please contact our Business Development Lead:

**Owen Miller**

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