

Shetland Partnership

Methods and Techniques



Newsletters

Newsletters are a way to provide information to people, either electronically or as a printout.

Suitable for:

Newsletters are suitable for sharing information with a broad audience. They work well if they are interesting, easy to read, and well-designed. You can also include a story in an existing newsletter.



Type of engagement:



Inform

How to do it:

- Newsletters will vary in length but should be designed with the target audience in mind. Usually the target audience would include:
 - Users of a service
 - The community
 - Those likely to be impacted by an issue, strategy, policy or decision
 - People with an interest in an issue.
 - Rating scales
- Newsletters should be accessible and written in Plain English. Making a document accessible includes, amongst other things, choosing fonts that are easily readable, and using colours that have suitable contrast against the background colour. If the newsletter will be made available online, think about ensuring it is compatible with online accessibility tools (such as screen readers).
- Think about the following:
 - Who will decide what goes in the newsletter?
 - Who will design it?
 - How often will you produce it?

- The focus should be on presenting relevant and interesting information in a concise and visually appealing way. Contact details and/or website details should be included so that follow-up questions can be asked by those reading the newsletter.
- Consider whether the newsletter will be available electronically, via paper copies, or both.
- Platforms for electronic newsletters can be found by looking through an online search engine. If applicable, it's a good idea to check with your organisation's Data Protection Officer and ICT team to determine which platform may be suitable.
- Consider GDPR requirements when looking at content, and distribution lists. More information can be found here: [UK GDPR guidance and resources | ICO](#) and here: [Electronic mail marketing | ICO](#).
- Plan the content. If you are to receive articles for it, decide a deadline when they must reach you by.
- Distribution - think about where and how newsletters will be made available. This will determine who reads it.

★ Advantages	⚠ Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletters are useful for letting people know what work is being done around a particular issue, and why the work is being done • Newsletters are a widespread and widely understood form of communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written materials can be challenging for people with lower literacy levels, those who speak languages other than English, or individuals with learning difficulties, disabilities, or visual impairments. It's important to think about how to address these barriers. • Materials should be high quality otherwise their credibility is reduced. • Newsletters can be difficult to update – information can date quickly, for example.

Further information:

[Plain English Campaign](#)

Case study:

Bressay Newsletter – Celebrating Bressay and Encouraging Community Engagement

(see online at: <https://www.shetlandpartnership.org/examples-community-participation/bressay-newsletter>)