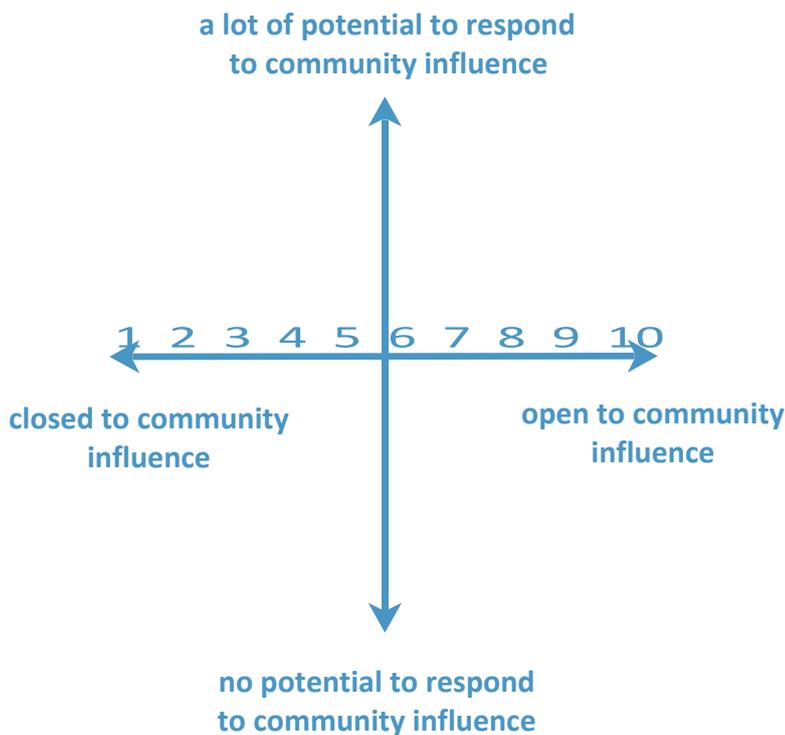


echo[©]

echo is a 'tool' for organisations, public agencies and partnerships to plot and develop
how open they are to community influence
in relation to their
potential to respond to community influence

The relationship between 'assessing how open you are to community influence' and 'your potential to respond to community influence', are demonstrated on an axis which is designed to encourage discussion and debate in agencies and across partnerships.



There are 10 positions on the horizontal axis, which illustrate a shift from doing things **to** communities to doing **with**. Each position has a set of characteristics reflecting a different experience for agencies - and for the communities they serve.

The vertical axis suggests ways for staff to talk about the factors which impede their potential to respond to community influence.

“The vertical axis works as a way of introducing barriers - getting people to face up to the need to think creatively and think about opportunities. It focuses you on involving people in decision making, makes you think of options and encourages a participative approach”



Trained echo facilitators

Supporting you to:

- ✓ respond to new Community Rights
- ✓ implement delivery plans for engaging with communities
- ✓ hear and respond to your communities
- ✓ respond to and be part of community-led planning
- ✓ work better with the voluntary & community sector
- ✓ plan for customer-led transformation
- ✓ develop strong partnerships



Echo in practice

The Wolverhampton Commissioning Board for Housing Support and Social Inclusion participated in an echo workshop in June 2010. At this session Board members explored:

- why community influence matters to their Board
- what influence means for the Board
- what 'community' means for the Board
- their current potential as a Board to respond to community influence
- the factors which impact on their potential to respond to community influence
- how open to community should the Board be
- how open to community influence they are currently

The rationale for using echo at this session was to review the Terms of Reference for the Board and to consider how they might need to change to elicit further community involvement and influence. In the end, the Board decided that they needed to connect with Experts by Experience to hear from them how influential they felt and why. (Consequently a Voice workshop was offered to Experts by Experience.)

Conclusions from the day

The Commissioning Board needs to build on the things that they already do, and do them better:

- develop the potential/capacity of the experts panel, including the service users 'behind the panel'
- develop the position of the expert panel in the influence structure, considering processes and routes to influence
- maximise on people who are new to the Board – have an induction/introduction process where members of the Board meet the experts
- work on how to evidence community influence – especially to the communities themselves
- plan much further ahead – 5 years in line with the strategy – to give people optimum time to research the subjects

In November 2012, the Joint Commissioning Board and a service user group requested an echo session at the recommendation of a participant in this session. The group engaged really well and came up with a number of areas for improvement - more details to follow!



echo2012

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"We got a lot out of using echo – it gave us a rationale to end the current set up and develop an approach with a new clarity of purpose".

Dudley Children's Trust Participation Board

Echo can be used to help:

- prompt discussion about your organisation and community influence
- identify your position on the framework
- compare your position with others, with partners
- recognise why things are – or are not – working
- understand and articulate the complexities of community engagement
- identify the things you need to do to be more open to influence
- plan improvement



"I have used echo as a tool to help managers in Transport and Highways think about how open they are to influence and from whom"

"I included echo as a tool in one of the actions when compiling our comprehensive partnership community engagement delivery plan"

"Working with echo is a useful method to help us stand back and see if children and young people are getting what they need"

"Working with echo has really expanded my vision - It makes you think about how things need to be improved"