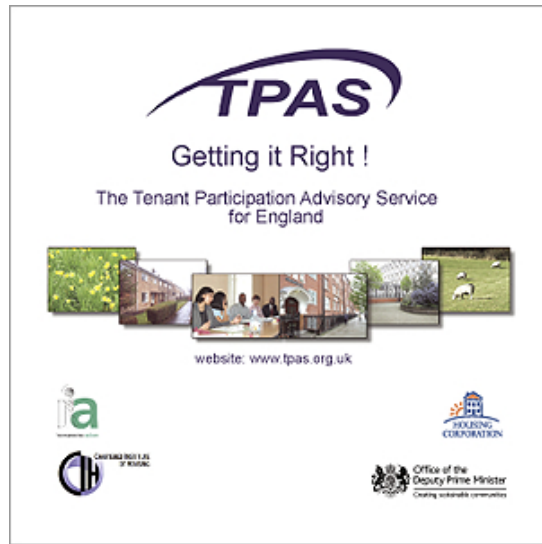


Innovation Into Action 'Getting it Right' CD Rom – Final Report



The Project

The CD Rom is an accessible learning tool to aid the establishment of good practice in involving tenants and innovative approaches to involving under-represented groups in tenant participation.

The main content of the CD Rom consists of around 14 video clips with linking text, showing involvement work. The clips target specific activities such as 'fun days', groups in remote rural communities, people with learning impairments and Black and Ethnic Minority tenants. The content includes best practice examples, training programmes, good practice guidance, checklists and exercises to help staff and tenants develop an effective way forward, plus details of resources, useful contacts and web links.

A unique feature is that of the provision of text 'pop up' boxes in English and four different community languages to aid people who have translation needs or hearing impairments.

The CD Rom will be of use to tenants' groups and social housing landlords to help develop more effective ways of involving tenants in improving service delivery. In particular the CD Rom should be of benefit to tenants whose first language is not English and to tenants with reading difficulties.

How the project came about

The idea for the project originally came from needs identified in the development of Chester-Le-Street Tenants' Panel. The group felt that a learning tool needed to be developed to aid the establishment of innovative

approaches to the involvement of under represented groups – in particular those in supported housing. It was felt that the production of an interactive CD-Rom for use by tenant activists, housing officers etc., was the type of medium best suited nowadays as the most accessible learning tool, especially as a CD-Rom could link to the Internet and therefore provide information and material that would remain up to date.

Also, as the material was mainly aimed at under representative groups, it was felt a primarily visual resource would be more effective for people who struggle with printed material. Most of the innovation within the CD Rom came from ideas on how to make the CD Rom accessible to under-represented groups eg – speech bubbles for the hearing impaired, and community languages text pop-up boxes.

The Process

TPAS applied for the grant with Chester–Le-Street tenants as the steering group monitoring the grant work, Marianne Hood as project worker and a Company called 'British Events On-line' who were appointed to produce the video.

There were a number of meetings with all partners that: -

- Decided on content for video clips
- Sorted out agreements and arrangements for working with the various individuals and organisations in the clips
- Decided on resources to go on the CD-Rom
- Sorted out copyright, obtaining electronic versions of resource material etc.
- Wrote and edited specific information where no resources were available
- Agreed how information would be presented on the Cd-Rom
- Agreed on which community languages to use
- Agreed design of CD-Rom
- Looked at various drafts of CD-Rom and sorted out amendments etc.

What went well

The planning meetings were always very productive in relation to sorting out the content of the CD-Rom, and these were supplemented by ongoing e-mails and teleconferences in between meetings.

The filming of the video clips went very well and all participants enjoyed being filmed.

The technological aspects of the unusual features (eg the languages) were managed by the video company extremely competently.

Keith Hill MP, agreed to launch the CD-Rom at the CIH Conference in Harrogate. The Chester-Le Street tenants really appreciated this, with some of them turning up on the day to be photographed with him!

What went wrong

Although the majority of the Grant was paid for by IIA, there were additional costs (that included the costs of the community languages) that had been applied for via the Community Training and Enabling Grant. This grant had been verbally agreed for the end of the financial year 2003, but the grant regime got frozen at the beginning of 2004 and until the July we had no idea whether we would be receiving this particular grant to cover costs. However, the IIA grant work was obviously continuing, so for a couple of months there was uncertainty about what work we could allow to happen, and problems with the paying of invoices etc., until this was resolved.

Issues that came up

Working with a commercial company who did not understand grant funding regimes, especially when we had a problem with income at one point, was a major problem. They refused to delay invoices and did not understand about the cash flow problems TPAS was experiencing. It was only because other people involved in the project delayed their invoicing and because the IIA loaned us over half the CTEG money to cover the CD-Rom production costs, that the project got finished, with all the agreed features in it.

The issues around whether there would be funding to cover all the grant work and how to proceed meant that the time taken in relation to managing the project greatly exceeded the original time allocated to the project.

It was also disappointing that a number of landlords when asked to provide their good practice resources for the CD-Rom, either did not provide the material, even after many requests, or wanted money for providing the service that we could not afford to provide. Although not always the first one approached, all the organisations that appear on the CD Rom, did so for free and we greatly appreciate their input to the CD.

What the grant paid for

- Project Development – meetings and other forms of communication (e.g. e-mail) that established and agreed the key functions of the CD to ensure that its message, design and genre was appropriate to the project objectives.
- Technical Specification - the content, format and structure of the CD-Rom.
- Design Development – the design of the view screens and graphics.
- Video and Audio Presentation. Acting on the decision made in relation to scripts, the storyboard for each clip, the filming and editing, the recording of voice overs and the editing of these.
- Content Development – the adding of clips, and audio to the rest of the material. Obtaining the relevant resource material needed to be incorporated in the CD.

- Testing of the CD-Rom – Technical Testing by British Events Online, user testing by Chester Le Street Tenants’ Panel, Chester Le Street officers and TPAS staff.
- Copying of the CD and dissemination. 10,000 copies were produced and the CD-Rom was promoted in the housing press and at TPAS events and other events (including the high profile CIH and NHF conferences). CD-Rom mailed to all local authority landlords, RSLs and tenant members of TPAS and anyone else who contacted TPAS for a copy.

Exit Strategy

The CD ROM deliberately links to a number of websites and website resources so that it will have a longer shelf life than normal. As websites get updated, the links will direct people to the updated information.

We will also promote the CD Rom on our new website due to be launched January 2005 and will continue to promote it as part of all our Services to tenants.

And finally

We have asked for users to give us feedback on the CD Rom and have already had a number of views. All have been very positive and have covered the following points: -

- Users have appreciated that the CD Rom is free.
- Users have appreciated the quick turnaround in receiving the CD Rom when requested. (We have normally dispatched on day of request).
- Users have found the video clips extremely useful for training purposes, and had not previously thought of CD Rom as a format for video. As commercial videos on tenant participation issues are not widely available, this aspect of the CD Rom has filled a need for ‘training videos’.
- Users have found it difficult to view every aspect of the CD Rom in one sitting. This is seen as a positive ‘problem’ as they are appreciative of the vast amount of information on this one CD that they will be able to dip into as an ongoing learning tool.

If you want any further information, please contact: -

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