

What happens when I have been on the Panel for three years?

Panel membership will last for two to three years. In order to ensure that as many people as possible get the opportunity to participate, new panellists will be recruited periodically. When new panellists are recruited some of the original members of the Panel will have to be taken off.

Is there anything else I should know?

There are two areas to note:-

1. All we ask is that you give your honest opinions; there are no right or wrong answers.
2. You will not be expected to meet any other Panel member or visit the Council Offices unless you have indicated that you would like to take part in focus groups or workshops.

Would you like to join?

If you would like to join the District Panel, please complete and return the attached joining form. Please return it in the postage paid envelope.

Further Information

If you have any queries, please contact the Corporate Improvement Officer on 01423 556068 or write to:-

Corporate Improvement Officer
Dept of Corporate Policy and Improvement
Harrogate Borough Council
Council Offices
Crescent Gardens
Harrogate
HG1 2SG

You can also email to
districtpanel@harrogate.gov.uk

or visit our website at
www.harrogate.gov.uk/engagement



District Panel

Listening to Local People



In 1999, the Council set up a District Panel to consult residents across the District on issues affecting them. The Panel is a unique opportunity for residents to communicate their views on a variety of topics and help shape how the Council can work for you. The Panel is ready to take on new members. If you are interested in taking part, please read on!



What exactly is the District Panel?

The District Panel is made up of 1,500 local people and is selected so there is a balance of gender, age and where people live, ensuring that all groups have a “say” on local issues.

Why does the Council have a District Panel?

The Council has a Panel so that it can get the views of a cross-section of local people about Council services. In order for the Council to try and improve its services, it needs to know what people think on a variety of topics and issues affecting the quality of life in the District.

Will everyone who returns a form be placed on the Panel?

Yes, although some people may not be on the Panel straightaway. A representative panel of 1,500 people will be selected from those who respond.

The remaining people will be placed on a waiting list and will join the Panel as and when existing panellists move or drop out for other reasons. Those people on the waiting list who have indicated that they are willing to participate in focus groups and workshops may be asked to do so from time to time.

What is it like being a Panel member?

In 2006/2007, we asked our current panellists how satisfied they were with the District Panel. As many as **84.8%** said they were very satisfied or satisfied with the District Panel.

If I become involved in the Panel, what will I be expected to do?

Panel members will be asked to:-

- ❖ Complete up to five questionnaires per year (a postage paid envelope will always be provided).
- ❖ Return the completed questionnaire within three weeks of receipt.
- ❖ Be involved in the Panel for two or three years.
- ❖ If you have indicated that you are prepared to be involved in focus groups or workshops, then you may be invited to participate in one of these groups.

What will the Council do in return?

The Council will:-

- ❖ Keep your personal details confidential. The Panel is registered under the Data Protection Act and personal details will **never** be released to other organisations.
- ❖ Produce clear, easy to read questionnaires that are simple to fill in.
- ❖ Ask clear questions.
- ❖ Send clear, concise supporting information where applicable.
- ❖ All questionnaires are anonymous and will never be tied to an individual.
- ❖ Produce a regular newsletter to report back on results and tell you what has happened as a result of the consultation.
- ❖ Respond promptly to any queries you might have relating to the Panel.

Why are we asking for personal information?

On the joining form, we have included a few questions about you which will enable us to ensure that the Panel is broadly representative of people in the District. We can analyse whether certain criteria affects results (eg, if where you live affects use of leisure facilities, etc). Personal information will not be used in any other way.

What topics will I be consulted on?

Each year the Council will decide on what issues Panel members are consulted. The questionnaires themselves are produced by the Council’s Department of Corporate Policy and Improvement. Over the last 12 months panellists have been consulted on:-

- ❖ Waste and recycling
- ❖ Noise disturbance
- ❖ Local planning and development
- ❖ Access to Council services
- ❖ Customer care standards
- ❖ Renewable energy

What happens if I move?

If you move, please let us know. If you move to another address in the District you can remain on the Panel. If you move to another district, then the Council will take you off the list and replace you with someone from the waiting list.