



## KEY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

Understanding different types of people is key to connecting with households, businesses, and communities and creating resources that work for them. In March 2023, the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) held a workshop on persona engagement. This document highlights the main ideas from that session, offering useful tips for organisations wanting to better engage with different groups. It focuses on practical advice to help organisations build these insights into their engagement strategies and improve how they communicate with a variety of audiences.

### TO MAKE RESOURCES AS ACCESSIBLE AS POSSIBLE:

- **Use simple language:** Make sure that the language you use to convey the information is simple, clear and easy to understand for everyone (Average reading age for the UK is 9 years old).
- **Use short, simple sentences:** Keep sentences short and to the point. Use simple language and avoid technical jargon.
- **Use active voice:** The use of active voice is more straightforward than the passive voice. For example, "I wrote the report" is more straightforward than "The report was written by me."
- **Break up long paragraphs:** Long paragraphs can be overwhelming, especially for people who struggle with reading. Break up long paragraphs into shorter ones.
- **Use bullet points and lists:** Bullet points and lists break up information and make it easier to read.
- **Avoid slang and idioms:** Slang and idioms can be confusing for people who are not familiar with them. Stick to basic language that is widely understood.

#### **Provide multiple formats:**

Provide resources in multiple formats such as text, audio and video. This way, people can choose the format that suits their needs.

#### **Use accessible technology:**

Ensure that the technology used to access the resources is accessible. For example web pages which adjusts to the user's screen size (mobile and desktop friendly), and provide alternative text descriptions for images.

#### **Consider different needs:**

Consider the needs of people with different abilities and disabilities, such as those who are visually impaired, hearing impaired or have mobility issues.

#### **Offer translations:**

If your resources are in a specific language, consider providing translations in other languages to make them accessible to a wider audience. (Are websites/ resources translatable?)



## ENSURE KEY MESSAGES ARE CONSISTENT:

- **Develop a clear and concise messaging framework:** This framework should include consistent key messages that are aligned with flood resilience and flood risk management overall goals and objectives.
- **Communicate the messaging framework:** This includes employees, partners and stakeholders. Make sure that everyone understands the messaging framework and the importance of consistent messaging.
- **Provide training and resources:** Develop training programmes and provide resources to help stakeholders effectively communicate the key messages. This could include communication guidelines, templates and examples. Follow up sessions to the engagement workshop to discuss the key themes and a consistent message, may prove useful.



## LEVERAGE COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS:

**Partner with community influencers who have a large following in your target audience to help promote your message.**

### Local leaders can include:

**Elected officials:** individuals who have been elected to serve in a public office, such as mayors, town, parish and county councillors, or members of parliament.

**Civic leaders:** community organisers, activists and members of civic organisations.

**Business leaders:** entrepreneurs, small business owners and corporate executives.

**Religious leaders:** who hold a leadership position in a religious institution, such as a pastor, rabbi or imam. They play an important role in shaping the spiritual and moral values of a community.

**Education leaders:** teachers, school administrators or university professors.

**Social leaders:** social workers, health care professionals and counsellors.

### How to engage with local leaders:

**Network:** Attend community events and network with other individuals who may have connections to local leaders. This can help you to get introductions or referrals to the leaders you want to contact.

**Reach out through the appropriate channels:** Choose the appropriate channels to reach out to the leaders you want to contact. This could include email, phone, social media, by post or face to face. Keep in mind that some leaders may have specific protocols for how they prefer to be contacted.

Smaller channels can be incredibly useful for targeted messaging to specific audiences. Here are a few examples of smaller channels in the UK: agricultural, horticultural and environmental societies and groups, local community groups, sports clubs, charities, student societies etc.