

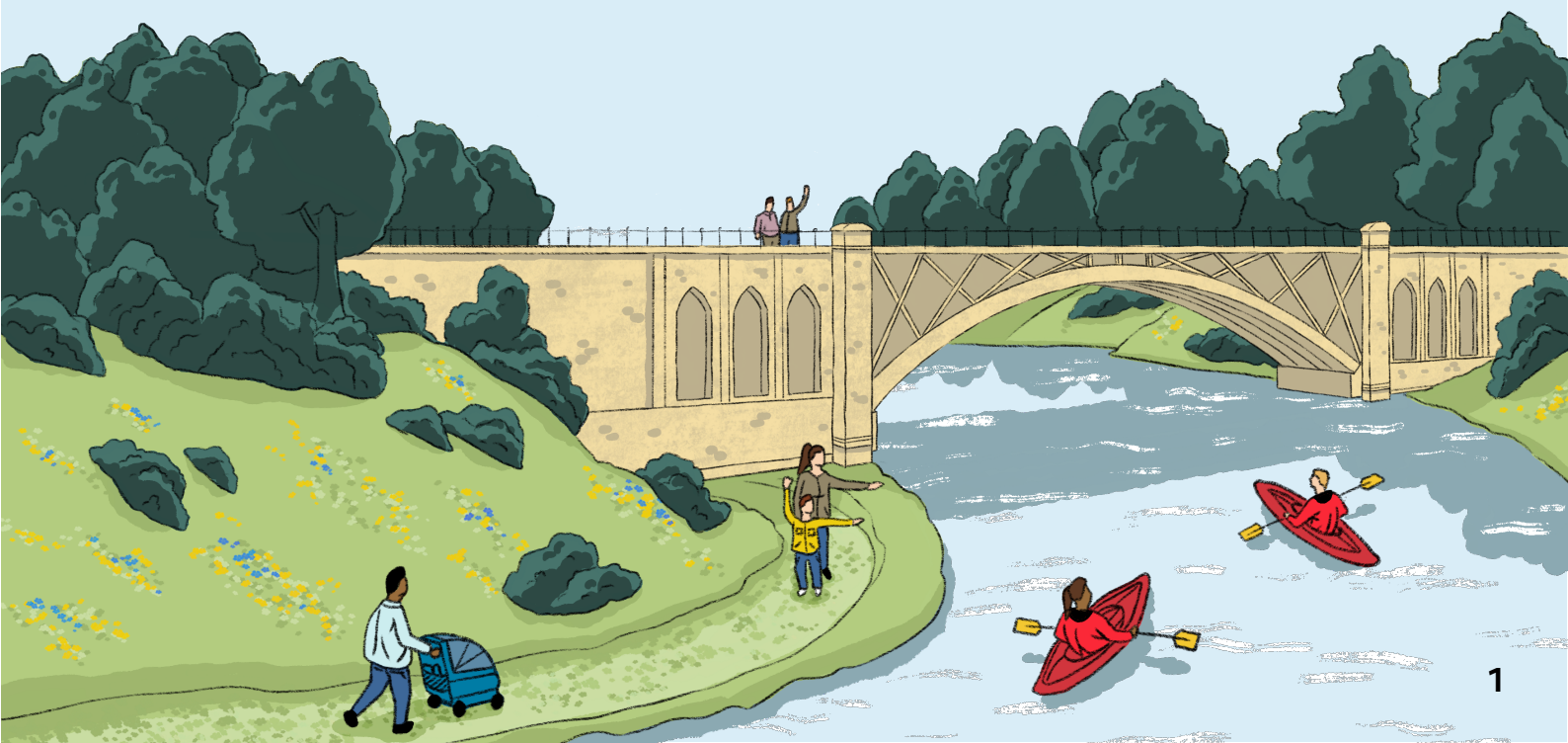
Participation Principles

When looking to develop something that will benefit others, always look to involve them. They will bring expertise about what will and won't work for them. You will avoid making wrong assumptions.

The end result will be better. You are more likely to make the best use of your resources. Everyone will grow through the process.

Be clear about what you want to achieve and how involving others will help. Develop and manage a process for working together in an accessible and inclusive way. Always make sure that people understand how their input has contributed.

To help you explore this in your own context, here are some questions, things to think about, and examples from our involvement and participation work at Barnwood Trust.



What's your project about?

What to think about

Is this part of wider work you're doing?

How does it link with your organisation's goals?

Why are you doing it now?

Have you involved people in this area of work before?



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

As part of Barnwood's Access to Nature work, we decided to develop a 'Learning Hub' website. We wanted to work in partnership with those facing barriers to accessing nature to produce short films showing what being in nature means to them.



Why do you want to involve Experts by Lived Experience (EbLEs)?

What to think about

What do you hope they will bring?

What do, and don't you want input on?

What challenges might there be in involving EbLEs?

What can you do to overcome the challenges?

Are you looking for people with specific expertise and experience?



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

It was important, at this stage of Access to Nature, to amplify the voices of disabled people and people with mental health conditions. We also wanted organisations managing nature spaces to be inspired by personal stories and join the Access to Nature movement. We wanted people with a love of nature, and a variety of access needs to be involved.



What is in scope, and what is not?

What to think about

What specific aspects of the work do you want EbLEs to contribute to?

What are the aspects that are fixed?

How will EbLE views be used in decision making?

Who holds the power?

It's important to be clear with everyone at the start.



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

Involvement was only the film making. We were not looking for any contribution to other content or the website design.



What do you want at the end of the project?

What to think about

This might be:

- a proposal to improve physical access
- accessibility information for a website
- developing a guidance document



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

We wanted a set of high quality, short films which showed how important it is for disabled people and people with mental health conditions to be able to access and enjoy nature spaces.



What long-term impact are you hoping to achieve?

What to think about

Do you want:

- more disabled people to visit?
- to apply your learning to other sites?
- widen opportunities for volunteering?



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

In the long-term, we want more nature spaces to be accessible so that more disabled people and people with mental health conditions can benefit from being in nature.



What skills do you need to make involvement happen well?

What to think about

You will definitely need:

- a skilled facilitator
- someone who understands the
- accessibility requirements of those you're involving
- a good organiser



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

We needed the skills to turn personal experiences into film. This meant supporting people to share their story and develop ideas of how this might be presented in film.



How long will it take?

What to think about

Do not rush! You will need to:

- consider how many sessions you need to do what you want to do
- plan ahead, including booking venues and transport
- give people the information they need to form an opinion
- give people plenty of time to share their views in a way that works for them
- think about what the weather might be like if you want to work outdoors
- think about what other factors might have an impact on time, such as someone needing an interpreter



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

We held an introduction session. This allowed the group to meet each and share their nature experiences. We also reminded the group what we planned to achieve, how it fitted into the wider work, and what the schedule was.

In our second session we supported people to share their experiences and develop the structure of their film. Filming and editing happened over about 6 weeks.

We ended the project by bringing the group back together to share the films, give an update on the wider work, and celebrate what had been achieved. Overall, it took 16 weeks from start to finish.



How will you keep on track?

What to think about

Build in reflection time with colleagues after each session to think about:

- how the session worked
- were people engaged
- whether you achieved what you wanted to
- any changes that might be needed in the future sessions
- input from EbLEs which may add to the project or take it in a different direction



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

A plan was developed for each session in partnership with all staff involved.

After each session and during production, the staff involved met to reflect on progress and identify any concerns.



How will you support people to take part?

What to think about

When you invite people to share their views on something, you need to think about:

- giving them enough information to form an opinion
- sharing information in a way that works for them
- giving people the time they need to think and express themselves
- using methods that allow people to express themselves in ways that work for them
- making sure the meeting space is accessible for everyone involved
- covering the cost of personal assistants and interpreters if needed



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

In the long-term, we want more nature spaces to be accessible so that more disabled people and people with mental health conditions can benefit from being in nature.



How will you reward EbLEs for their involvement?

What to think about

When you're asking people to give their time and expertise it's appropriate to pay them. Options include:

- An hourly 'EbLE' payment
- Vouchers
- Benefits like event tickets or passes



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

We offer EbLEs a fixed hourly rate, book taxis for them if needed and reimburse other costs, including personal assistants and interpreters.

We have a DWP contact who can offer benefit related advice.



What will you do at the end of the project?

What to think about

Ending well is important. It will help EbLEs to feel that their contributions are valued and make them more likely to be involved again. Things to think about:

- review and celebrate what's been achieved during the project
- help EbLEs to understand and celebrate the value of their contributions
- help EbLEs to recognise their skills
- keep EbLEs updated on how their input has been used in decision making, what decisions have been made, and what's changed as a result



What we're doing at Barnwood Trust

For our final session we took the group to Tinkley Gate, Nailsworth. We showed the films, asking the group for their reactions after each one.

We checked that people were happy with their film.

We asked what being involved had meant to them, giving individuals space to share with the group if they wanted to.

There was also an update on the Learning Hub and how it would be launched, with the suggestion that members of the group might like to attend launch events to speak about their film.

