

Your LINK for improving health and social care

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Seldom Heard / Harder to Reach

NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent have adopted the phrase 'harder to reach' based on the notion that people are not hard to reach merely harder than others and that more time, effort and resource is required in order to engage with those people.

So it is not necessarily that they are hard to reach its just that the right approach needs to be found in order to help them get involved.

Definition of 'harder to reach' (NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent):

- People who do not traditionally engage in public consultations – seldom heard
- From hidden communities such as drug users and sex trade workers
- People that may require different ways of communicating such as people with learning disabilities or those with a visual, hearing impairment
- People who are difficult to contact
- People who fail to access the services that are available
- People who tend to have poorer health
- People who are disinterested
- People who are disillusioned.

Categories (as defined by NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent):

1. **Children and young people**
 - a. School leavers with low educational attainment
 - b. Youths with a record of repeat offending
 - c. Disadvantaged Children
 - d. Young parents – teenage mothers and fathers
 - e. Children with mental health illness
 - f. Children with poor health
 - g. Sexually active teenagers
 - h. Children with learning disabilities
 - i. Children from ethnic communities whose first language is not English
 - j. Young people who fail to access the services available.
2. **Transient people**
 - a. Gypsy and traveller communities
 - b. Homeless people
 - c. Refugees and asylum seekers.
3. **People of non-heterosexual sexual orientation**
 - a. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities.

4. **People who are disinterested and / or disillusioned**
 - a. People who are difficult to contact
 - b. People who tend to have poorer health
 - c. The long-term unemployed over 50
 - d. People on low level, long term incapacity benefit.

5. **Hidden people**
 - a. Sex workers
 - b. Drug users
 - c. People with alcohol addiction
 - d. Carers
 - e. The housebound
 - f. Disabled
 - g. Those with mobility needs.

6. **People who require different ways of communicating**
 - a. People from minority ethnic communities and other people whose first language is not English
 - b. People with disabilities; hearing impairments, sight impairment
 - c. Learning disabled
 - d. People lacking basic literacy and numeric skills
 - e. People lacking basic life and social skills.

7. **Other**
 - a. Older people
 - b. People who use mental health services.

Key Questions

- What makes them harder to reach? Barriers?
- Who do we currently have contact with within these groupings?
- How much contact do we have with them?
- Do we have a specific lead/champion within that community?

SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS WITH HARD TO REACH GROUPS

Table 3: Tool to identify characteristics of the hard to reach

Characteristic	Definition	Attributes	Examples: some sub groups of...	Prompts: What do we know? What do others do?
Demographic	The quantity and characteristics of the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widely dispersed population, Large numbers, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers Small businesses Young males 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where are these groups found? How many are in the group? What do members of the group have in common? (Where) do they get together? Who else contacts them and how?
Cultural	The way of life of a group of people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of established information networks, Unable to access services easily, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-readers Home workers Minority ethnic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which organisations could we work with to develop an information network? Are there individuals we could work through? How? What are the alternatives to written guidance?
Behavioural	The manner in which the group function or operate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distrust of Government Agencies, Distrust of HSE. More pressing issues than Health and safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illegal workers Unstable failing companies Small businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who do they trust? What or who can influence them? What about the timing of the intervention?
Attitudinal	What they think about H&S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group defined by the degree of willingness and awareness to tackle H&S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible employers At risk Employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where are this group? Where (realistically) do we want them to be? What do the need to get them there?
Administrative	Our arrangements hinder access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 24/7 economy HSE ignorance of established information networks, Responsibility for enforcement IS split. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contractors night workers LA /HSE responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What changes can we make to reach the group? How can we improve our information?

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