

Checklist for Encouraging People (to Be (and Stay) Involved in Your Group)

New people at your meetings?

- ✓ If you see someone new arrive, welcome them, talk to them - just don't ignore them.
- ✓ Bring a friend or neighbour to the group. Word of mouth and encouragement are the most effective ways of involving new people.
- ✓ Act as a mentor, or buddy, for a new member, explain things if necessary, such as references to previous work done by the group. Generally check they're comfortable.

What to do with new people?

- ✓ Share out tasks among members. If you are working on something, try and include at least one person who has never done that particular sort of work before.
- ✓ Get small working groups to do particular jobs, reporting back to the main meeting for support, to answer any questions and to check it's OK to continue. These smaller groups should try and have someone new involved and not be made up exclusively of regulars or the most experienced.

Can new people get involved in your group?

- ✓ Regularly consider the practicalities of your meetings - how accessible, or easy to find, are your meeting spaces? When do you hold your meetings? Try different meeting times and days, and ask people when is better for them. Consider young people, parents and carers.
- ✓ Recognise the value of people's different life experience.
- ✓ Take account of people's different abilities to commit time and energy.
- ✓ Now and again plan activities that encourage wider involvement. Make sure that all the usual suspects get involved, and talk with new people. What might seem like a "simple" piece of work to you may be really exciting to a potential new member.
- ✓ Where do you publicise the group and its meetings, if at all? If you want to do something about a gender imbalance, or want to work with more black and minority ethnic groups, does your publicity/word of mouth go to where these people will see or hear about it? Does it welcome them explicitly to your group? Does it encourage them to get involved?

Keeping People

- ✓ Publicise and celebrate your achievements. Make your own posters or newsletters, to let people know you're successful.
- ✓ Don't forget to thank people when they do something. When things are going well say so.
- ✓ Pass around an agenda at the beginning of each meeting so that people can add their points to it.
- ✓ During meetings, do you challenge put-downs or discriminatory remarks? Does your group have an understanding of equality of opportunity and what this means practically? Do you set aside time in any meeting to consider these issues and how they affect your group?
- ✓ Agree basic rules for the running of your group (such as how decisions are made, what the structure is, how meetings are run) together with everyone involved. Write them up and make sure everyone has a copy of these. This makes it more transparent and easier for people to be involved.