

Getting Started with Community Listening

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to active listening. In a community of 3000, if we each took 5 mins to listen to our family, friends and neighbours that's 15,000 minutes of listening! These could be of immense value in terms of suggesting and guiding community action.

How to do it...

- **Raise awareness about the need for intentional listening and sharing** in your families, pods, friendship groups, amongst your neighbours, in your street, via your community website in the queue in your local shop, at places of worship, with your work colleagues online.
- **Create a post for the community website or Facebook** to circulate the idea about community listening, why it is important and to find out if there are others thinking the same thing and would like to plan a listening campaign.
- **Contact your local mutual aid, help hub, community group or parish council** to discuss the idea of a community listening campaign to help gather vital information in order to understand people's experiences, hopes and ongoing needs.
- **A simple series of key questions to ask people as part of a listening campaign:**
 - How are you?
 - How have you and your family been impacted by the current situation?
 - How has your community been impacted by Covid 19?
 - What do you think the needs of your community are now?
- **Advertise the listening campaign** via the village website with links to your survey, Facebook, and other social media opportunities
- **Ensure that all the initiatives comply with Covid and GDPR regulations** and agree how you will collate the responses.

Possible approaches...

- **Street Listening - a street by street campaign** e.g. 'street listeners' making contact with their neighbours could work in some parts of a village
- **Mutual aid and community groups/ foodbanks etc. could carry out short interviews** or circulate a simple survey amongst those they are supporting
- **Share questions** via Facebook or community websites
- **A social media tag to share** with an invitation to listen to friends and neighbours - #Take5toListen'
- **Organise** anonymous phone ins for those who are self-isolating or housebound
- **Community Listening Posts**, e.g., a village hall, local church, local pub where people can come at appointed times and have their stories, experiences, concerns, hopes etc. recorded on short videos
- **Create a simple online survey using Survey Monkey**, using the questions above as a starting point.

Community First Oxfordshire can offer advice, practical and training

- **Listen In - Listen Out online training in active listening** – visit www.communityfirstoxon.org
- Or just contact us for a chat - info@communityfirstoxon.org