



SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION ACTION LEARNING SET

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Social networking has the potential to revolutionise how councils engage with children and young people.

The LGiU's Children's Services Network will run an Action Learning Set between January 2010 and June 2010 for local authorities, voluntary sector organisations and the private sector. It will explore how local government can harness the potential of social networking sites to promote youth participation in the democratic process and in the delivery of children's services.

The project will encourage local authorities to work with other public, private and third sector service providers to develop their capacity and commitment to engaging with young people through social networking.

BACKGROUND

Social Networking Sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Myspace and Bebo are becoming increasingly important to the daily lives of young people in Britain. A 2008 Ofcom report found that 49 per cent of children aged 8-17 who use the internet have set up their own profile on a social networking site.

A recent study in the United States found that Facebook usage is positively associated with increases in social trust, civic participation, and political engagement of students, even after controlling for demographic, socio-economic, and socialisation variables.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION LEARNING SET

This Action Learning Set will enable its participants to promote the usefulness of social networking sites in local government with the following objectives.

- Explore the potential of social networking sites and their importance for local authorities.
- Establish a common and acceptable framework within which social networking sites can be used safely to engage young people.
- Use social networking sites to actively engage young people in the design of council-led children and young people's services including education, youth services and social care.
- Establish opportunities to work closely with schools and youth services in the commissioning of work to support this project.
- Work on a joint bid to the Empowerment Fund from the Communities and Local Government Department for the resources to further the aims of the project.

WHO IS LEADING THE ACTION LEARNING SET?

Jasmine Ali from the LGiU will facilitate all of the sessions and the online network, with additional guest facilitators and experts at each session. Contact: Jasmine.Ali@lgiu.org.uk

WHAT ARE THE ACTION PROJECTS?

As well as providing opportunities to share, discuss and get support for your own individual work engaging with SNS, we hope to provide opportunities to collaborate on shared projects such as drafting a clear policy framework for using SNS and developing our own SNS participation tools.

WHO SHOULD JOIN?

The sessions are designed for both practitioners and managers exploring the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) to engage young people in local democracy and/or organisational decision-making, including:

- Youth workers
- Policy officers
- Councillors
- Officers and councillors working in Democratic Services
- Officers and councillors interested in youth participation and engagement

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN

Here are some comments from the course run by the LGiU in 2009:

‘This has been a fantastic ALS. Well organised and run, with clear outcomes and hopefully a great set of resources to take forward.’
Jo Brocklebank, CS Web Project Officer, Hampshire County Council

‘It has been a hugely informative and enjoyable learning set with quality speakers and facilitators — thank you.’
Petra Roberts, Cultural Programme Officer, Hackney Council

‘It has been a great opportunity to help shape the future use of social media and to motivate LAs to move forward.’
Tom Gaskin, Youth Participation Officer, Norfolk County Council

‘It has been great — released my inner geek! Great speakers who share.’
Louise Piper, Kent County Council

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

Action Learning Set members will come together for full day or residential sessions every month to hear expert input, join group discussion and workshops, develop practical skills, share practice and learning, and to work on shared action projects that build the capacity of public bodies to promote youth engagement through SNS.

Monthly meetings will be complemented by an actively supported online network for the Action Learning Set, and opportunities to carry on discussions inbetween meetings through web conferencing.

Meeting 1 (residential): Understanding Participation and Social Network Sites: opportunities and risks

Thursday 21st - Friday 22nd January 2010

Introductions: Getting to know each other and introducing the Action Learning Set.

Presentations: Introducing Social Network Sites and Youth Participation — Bill Badham; Safe and Sound Foundations — Josie Fraser; Risks and Responses to Abuse — Alex Nagle, CEOP; SNS and Youth Participation in Norfolk — Tom Gaskin.

Hands-on activities: Social Media Masterclass — exploring tools including listening dashboards, online video and more. Netmapping — a shared workshop for young people and adults to explore the power of networks in creating change.

Discussions: Current experience of SNS and new possibilities. Responses to opportunities and risks.

Action projects: Introduction to action projects.

Meeting 2: Contexts for Social Media Participation

Friday 26th February 2010

Updates from delegates: Identifying shared action learning projects

Presentations : Finding our Perspectives — Carl Whistlecraft, Kirklees Council; SNS and Commissioning — Jasmine Ali; Local Democracy and Participation — Jonathan Carr-West, LGiU.

Hands-on activities: Entry level exploration of SNS. Identifying opportunities and barriers of our work.

Discussions: How young people are using SNS — young people explain their experiences.

Action projects: Explanation of goals and an introduction to open space sessions.

Meeting 3: Approaches to SNS Participation: tools, techniques and methods

Friday 26th March 2010

Updates from delegates and peer-assist session for sharing practical problems and solutions.

Presentations: Building your own SNS — Nathalie McDermott; Pings, Pingback and Data — Steven Flower, Substance; Introduction to SNS Apps — Harry Harold, Neon Tribe.

Hands-on activities: Social Media Surgery — a chance to get expert input and consultancy on your social networking questions.

Action projects: Time to work on action learning projects, creating first drafts with expert input.

Meeting 4: A Strategic Approach: exploring where SNS participation fits

Thursday 22nd April 2010

Updates from delegates and small group peer-assists.

Presentations : How SNS Participation fits into a Local Authority — Carl Haggerty, Devon County Council; Social Media Game — David Wilcox, Social by Social; Participant presentation on learning so far.

Hands-on activities: Simulation game exploring the use of social network sites in community consultation.

Discussions: Roundtable discussion — fitting SNS participation into your organisation.

Action projects: Time to work on action learning projects with expert input and open space sessions.

Meeting 5: SNS participation and Digital Democracy: sharing learning so far

Friday 21st May 2010

Updates from delegates and peer-assist/open space session for sharing learning.

Presentations : Democracy and New Media — Mark Wheeler, London Metropolitan University; Digital Democratic potential — Julia Gidden, 21st Century Consultancy.

Hands-on activities: Workshop — creating the ideal digital democracy in your town; Skill-sharing session — using everyday digital media tools.

Discussions: Trend-spotting — what's coming next and how can we stay ahead of the curve?

Action projects: Time to work on action learning projects with expert input and decide which products they will develop.

Meeting 6: SNS participation and Digital Democracy: sharing learning so far

Friday 25th June 2010

Updates from delegates and an opportunity to explore the future of the Action Learning Set.

Presentations : Evaluation and Metrics — Alice Casey and Liz Azyan; Where Next? Planning the Future of Learning in the Action Learning Set — a national reference group on SNS.

Hands-on activities: Extra opportunities to focus on issues that participants have raised during previous meetings and web conferences.

Discussions: Fishbowl — social network sites as platforms for activism, and the role of local authorities.

Action projects: Sharing learning and reporting back on outcomes.

ACTION LEARNING SET

BOOKING FORM

Deadline for joining: 11 January 2010

Email Jasmine.Ali@lgiu.org.uk

Rates: Policy Officers from Democratic Services and Youth Workers: £1,200 (£1,380 inc VAT); LGiU affiliates/CSN subscribers and voluntary sector: £1,500 (£1,725 inc VAT) Others: £2,000 (£2,300 inc VAT)

Please complete one form for each delegate. Photocopies acceptable. Complete in block capitals.
Amount to be invoiced/cheque (payable to LGiU) enclosed for*: £

LGiU VAT REG NO: 557 4057 14 *Delete as appropriate

Address/Contact for invoicing purposes

Name: _____ Position: _____

Authority/organisation: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____ Purchase order no: _____

Delegate details

Name: _____ Position: _____

Authority/organisation: _____

Address (if different from above): _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____

Email (specifically for joining instructions): _____

Special requirements (Please inform us of any special requirements, dietary or otherwise): _____

**FAX FORM BACK TO 020 7554 2801 OR POST TO: LGiU EVENTS TEAM,
22 UPPER WOBURN PLACE, LONDON WC1H 0TB**

**For specific requirements or enquiries, please contact Jasmine Ali or Pat Stevens on
020 7554 2811 or pat.stevens@lgiu.org.uk**

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