

Stage: Ideation - Substage: Brainstorming and generating ideas Idea days and policy jams

References: UK Open Policy Making toolkit



What is it for?

Idea days and policy jams are a way to help policymakers understand how people experience their policies in the real world and work together to create better policies. They are examples of design thinking to build services and policies focused on users' needs and experiences.

The jam itself is a day, or more, in a location outside of government where interested parties, policymakers and users talk through their problems and create solutions together.

How to use it?

1. Understand what you want to achieve

It's very easy to hold an idea day (all you need is a good location, pens and paper), but it's more difficult to gather useful information and data from it. You will need to know what you want to achieve before you begin - and make sure the aim is sensible and achievable. Most idea jams either look for solutions with users and citizens or work out what their current experience is.



2. Listen, don't tell

The point of an idea day is to listen to the problems and ideas people have and work with them openly and productively. Rather than shutting ideas down and telling people why things won't work, look out of the box and think of unrealistic ideas that can then be adapted. You should facilitate and guide discussions and tasks so that they are fixing the problem for which the idea day was set up.

3. Empower people to think differently

An idea day is a space for both users and policymakers to think outside the box and engage in a meaningful debate.

4. Before the jam

You must plan and structure an idea jam to make sure you gather the best data and ideas from the event.

5. Running the jam

You should use a facilitator when running an idea day. Facilitators let the discussion flow more freely, but can also make sure it runs in the direction policymakers need. Their neutrality can enable a more open and level playing discussion.

Ideas

Data & information

Key stakeholders

Solutions