

Adapted by Matthew Horne

# Diamond 9

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A workshop tool designed to help people collectively prioritise a long list of issues. It is an excellent way of facilitating conversations between people who rarely meet and discuss important issues together.

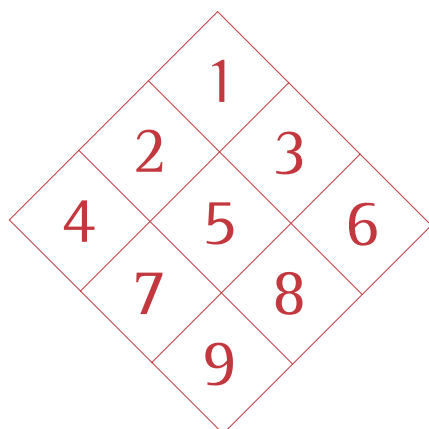
# Diamond 9

## Why play Diamond 9?

The aim is to produce lots of discussion between staff in a relatively short space of time. It is an effective way of getting everyone to agree a short list of priorities.

## Why is it called Diamond 9?

Participants are given a long list of issues or questions. They are asked to select 9 of the most important items and place them on a diamond shaped grid like the one below:



The most important item is placed in the apex of the diamond. The least important of the 9 is placed at the bottom of the diamond. Items in each row are of equal importance.

## How can we play Diamond 9?

- Ask staff individually to read the long list of items and privately reflect on their importance. They should individually sort their chosen 9 items into the diamond pattern according to order of importance.
- Divide staff into groups of 3-5 people who don't normally work closely together. Ask members of each group to share the patterns they have individually generated and explain to one another the reasons for their selection. Can they now combine their individual selections and agree a Diamond 9 list on behalf of their small group?
- Each small group of staff should present their group's selection to the rest of the staff and explain briefly how they arrived at this selection. The workshop facilitator should test each group's decision making by asking them to explain why they prioritised one item over another.
- The whole group now attempts to identify any common choices that most of the smaller groups selected or rejected. They collectively agree the one item that is most important.

## What equipment do we need in order to play?

- Ideally each item in the long list is written on a separate small card so they can be moved around easily. Each participant needs a full set of cards.

- Try introducing 2 blank wild cards where staff can write their own ideas if they wish. The participants could cut out these cards from a sheet of A4 as part of the exercise.
- Each participant needs an A4 diamond shaped grid to record his or her personal choices and each small group needs a larger A3 version for their group selection.
- A flip chart and pens to record the conclusions of the whole group discussion.

The items in this version of Diamond 9 are a set of questions developed by NCSL and DEMOS. They arise from research about what Networked Learning Communities could learn from the published literature from initiatives such as Beacon Schools, and Education Action Zones.

One version of this workshop was used at the launch of the NLC programme in June 2002 and a separate version has been used by the New Visions Programme for Early Headship, in addition to the original version, which has also been used in various ways. Please feel free to use these questions or develop your own list of items that are more relevant for your own work.

**We are keen to hear about how you use this workshop so that we can learn how to improve it further in order to make it more interesting, valuable and fun for others. Please contact NCSL at Cranfield if you would like to talk to anyone about using this workshop technique.**