

Take Part Pathfinder Buddy Pack

Welcome

Thank you for expressing interest in the Take Part Pathfinder Buddy Scheme.

This pack is for people interested in becoming a Buddy, and supporting participants involved in the Take Part Learning Programme.

The pack offers a closer look at Buddying and the Take Part programme as well as practical information about the Buddy role. It should help you to make a decision about becoming a Buddy and, if you decide to go ahead, the pack should also serve as a point of reference to help you carry out the role.

You can apply to become a Buddy by submitting the application form at the end of the pack.



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Introduction

People are being invited from the public, voluntary, community and faith sectors, to become Buddies to Take Part participants.

- The intention is for Buddies to provide advice, guidance and support to Take Part participants.
- In some instances, Buddies may be in a position to connect Take Part participants to new networks which support active citizenship.

A Buddy may be an individual working or volunteering in the same area of interest, or local authority area as a Take Part participant, or may have broader experiences which are of value to Take Part participants.

Take Part

The Black Country Take Part Pathfinder is part of a national initiative¹ supporting people to feel more influential in the areas where they live and encouraging a whole range of people to get involved in community and public life.

Over the next two years in the Black Country, Take Part will work directly with over 100 citizens and 40 organisations to improve community engagement and increase the level of influence that people and communities have over the decisions that affect their lives.

'Take Part' offers a distinctive and proven approach that enables people to make a difference in their community by focusing on:

- community-based learning to build the skills, confidence and experience needed to tackle local political, social and technical challenges
- an informal, practical approach that gives people an understanding of how power works and how they can learn to influence decisions and policies
- open dialogue and reflection as key learning tools, recognising that change in a community emerges from individuals working together

¹ Communities & Local Government (CLG) fund Take Part as part of their work to achieve national indicators: Public Service Agreement 21:4 and Public Service Agreement 15:3 - you can read more about these by clicking on the following links: [PSA 21](#); [PSA 15](#)

What it means

To you ... being a Take Part Buddy

You can:

- ✓ share your skills, knowledge and experience
- ✓ make a difference to the experience of participants on the Take Part learning programme
- ✓ make a key contribution to a national initiative
- ✓ directly contribute to national indicators and local initiatives around citizen engagement by helping to develop active citizens of the future
- ✓ assist others to develop an enhanced understanding of the relationships and roles within the public and voluntary sectors, and in partnership arenas
- ✓ enhance your own personal learning through a unique insight into citizen experiences of services and democracy
- ✓ enjoy an intellectual challenge
- ✓ experience a sense of achievement and motivation, generated from your desire and enthusiasm to help

You will have opportunities to network with other Buddies, from different sectors. Prospective Buddies include:

- Previous participants of Take Part Learning Programmes
- People active in Take Part Learning Programmes
- Public sector officers
- Voluntary sector officers
- Individuals who are active in their communities, volunteering and supporting others
- MPs
- Councillors

To Take Part Participants - having a Take Part Buddy:

"You feel you cannot step out there - you want to - but you need a bridge that's what a buddy gives you" [Ref](#)

Buddies can:

- be a source of guidance, insight and inspiration; a sounding board; a source of experience and examples; a resource for information and contacts
- help Take Part Participants to increase understanding, trust and confidence in public services and local democracy

- help Take Part Participants to realise how their learning is practiced in the workplace and the places where decisions are made
- offer Take Part Participants an insight into completely new areas of work
- offer specific expertise, for example:
 - Public Speaking** - i.e. if a Participant wasn't confident in public speaking and was due to give a presentation, the opportunity to shadow some-one when they did a public speech and then be offered support in preparing and delivering their own.
 - Minute Taking** - Support from an 'expert' minute taker - who can perhaps shadow you the first time you take minutes and then help you to write them up afterwards.
 - Report Writing** - it maybe that a participant would like advice and guidance in how to write a report or would like someone who can proof read their work for grammar and spelling etc.

The practicalities

Signing up

If you are interested in becoming a Take Part Buddy, please complete the application form at the end of this pack. Successful applicants will then be invited to a briefing session on 19th January 2010

This briefing session will take the form of a half-day workshop to discuss in more detail what the role entails, and meet some of the participants on the learning programme

What exactly is expected of a Buddy?

The commitment will inevitably vary, but as a minimum buddies are required to Buddy one participant and:

- attend the initial workshop
- have a regular buddying session with the Take Part participant - as a guide: an hour per month over 6 months
- promptly respond to contact from the Take Part participant via telephone/email

Essential guidelines on confidentiality, disclosure and reporting will be provided.

The relationship between Buddy and Take Part Participant is semi-professional; Buddies are under no obligation to maintain the relationship beyond the Take Part Learning Programme.

What is expected of a Take Part Participant?

The Take Part participant has prime responsibility for the success of the Buddying relationship. This means:

- having clear expectations about what they will achieve from the relationship
- selecting and considering issues for discussion in advance
- taking responsibility for arranging meetings and setting the agenda
- contacting their buddy rather than waiting to be contacted
- having the willingness to challenge and be challenged
- developing a sense of trust, openness and good humour
- reflecting on their own learning

What support does a Buddy get?

In addition to this pack, Buddies will be provided with:

- A key contact in their Local Authority Area. This will be a member of the Take Part Pathfinder Delivery Group:
- Dudley - Lorna Prescott
- Walsall - Sarah Oakley
- Wolverhampton - Sam Axtell
- Sandwell - Marcia
- http://www.blackcountrypathfinder.co.uk/about_us.php
- This person provides core support and will respond to any issues or queries which arise during the Buddying period.
- contact details of other Buddies involved in the programme
- an opportunity to come together with other Buddies to share experiences and learning; to reflect on their involvement and feed this back to the Take Part Delivery Group.

Buddies are not expected to be equipped to deal with all the questions they may receive; instead Buddies should be able to direct Take Part Participants to the relevant contact or service. A useful first port of call is your Take Part Delivery Group Contact.

More about ...

Take Part Buddies

Personal Attributes - you are

- Positive
- Sensitive
- Confident
- Encouraging
- Approachable

Personal Attributes - you have

- Good listening skills
- Good Interpersonal skills
- Integrity
- Behavioural awareness and interpersonal competence
- An ability to question, challenge, advise rather than tell
- Self awareness and a willingness to challenge you own assumptions

Experience of at least one of the following:

- ✓ working in the local public sector, voluntary, community, private or faith sector
- ✓ involvement in fora which involve active citizens (e.g. local strategic partnerships, regeneration boards, school governing bodies)
- ✓ effective networking - both internally & externally

Buddies must have:

- ✓ an interest in community development and community empowerment

Black Country Take Part Pathfinder

Vision : *'People and communities have influence over the decisions that affect their lives and that this influence is shaped by the values of participation, co-operation, social justice, equality and diversity'*

The Black Country Take Part Pathfinder is a partnership of:

- Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council
- Dosti: Dudley Community Empowerment Network
- Wolverhampton Partnership
- Walsall MBC
- Dudley MBC
- Changes
- Wolverhampton Learning Partnership

The partners have identified 5 key strands which encompass work with individuals and communities as well as public sector organisations and agencies:

1. Learning and support that build skills and confidence, within a community context.
2. Initiatives for community and voluntary groups and networks around monitoring and increasing their capacity to influence.
3. Initiatives for public sector agencies to assess their openness to community influence.
4. Joint dialogue across sectors and boroughs on themes of active critical citizenship, community empowerment, involvement and engagement.
5. Develop and support a pool of local facilitators through training, shadowing and provision of materials

Take Part Learning Programme

... is about learning and support that build skills and confidence, within a community context. This includes active shared learning leading to community leadership; increased individual and collective voices, action and influence.

The learning programmes include courses, a support network, a buddying scheme, and information on opportunities for civic and civil involvement.

Each course is approximately 12 sessions (days), around one month apart, and including a residential. Days and venues are arranged to suit learners.

The first learning course started in spring 2009 and a further one in Autumn 2009. Two further courses will start in 2010.

Formally, participants learn about

- What citizenship means
- Human Rights
- Diversity, difference & citizenship
- Democracy & decision making - How laws are made
- Systems and structures regionally and nationally
- How to influence decisions - lobbying and campaigning
- Consultation tools & techniques
- Assertive communication
- Presentation skills
- How meetings work
- Working with others
- Leadership - skills & qualities

The Take Part Learning Programme provides opportunities that support and encourage people to:

- recognise and build on their skills in ways which mean they continually develop their skills, take ownership of their own learning
- know themselves with and through other, to make sense of the factors which shape their and other people's lives
- know how the external world operates: choose where they want to be and what roles they want to have
- know where to go to get what you want, how to argue their point, lobby and campaign effectively

This results in citizen outcomes, which lead to wider and generic citizenship outcomes around: Personal confidence, Community relations, Civil participation, Civil co-operation and Civil engagement.

Take Part Pathfinder Buddy Scheme Application form

Please complete all sections of the form and use additional paper if necessary

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email:

1. Summarise your experience of at least one of the following:

- ✓ working in the local public sector, voluntary, community or faith sector
- ✓ involvement in fora which involve active citizens (e.g. local strategic partnerships, regeneration boards, school governing bodies)
- ✓ effective networking - both internally & externally

2. Tell us about your interest in community development and community empowerment

3. As a Buddy, what can you offer Take Part Participants?

4. What would you like to gain from being part of the Take Part Buddy Scheme?

By signing this form you are indicating that you are willing and able to make the minimum time commitment to the Take Part Buddy Scheme

Signed

Date

Please return the form by **21st December 2009** to:

Kath Pye
The Take Part Path Finder
Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council
16 Temple Street
Wolverhampton WV2 4AN

What happens next?

- The Buddy application forms will be reviewed in line with participant requirements
- Buddies likely to form a match with Take Part participants will be invited to a workshop on 19th January 2010. (You will be informed about this by 11th January. In the meantime please put the date in your diary).

Buddy contract

Aims of the contract

To provide a guide for both parties to agree guidelines for starting, maintaining, ending and evaluating their buddying partnership.

How to use the contract

This will help you discuss and agree how your buddy partnership is going to work best for you. You will find questions with space for recording what you agree as a reminder for the future.

Starting off

Questions and issues	Your agreement
Why are you doing this and what do you want to get from this buddying partnership? <i>Take into account: what you expect to gain and what you offer - from both perspectives, anything specific that is needed</i>	
Where are you going to meet? <i>Take into account: travelling, transport, safety</i>	
How often will you meet? <i>Take into account: work hours, caring responsibilities</i>	
When will you meet? <i>Take into account: work hours, caring responsibilities, family life</i>	
How and when is the best way to contact each other? <i>Take into account? When do you not want to be contacted?</i>	
Why would you contact each other? <i>Take into account: change of circumstance, notice of cancellation</i>	
How long is the buddying going to last?	

<p><i>Take into account: what is the focus for the buddying, what is realistic for you?</i></p>	
<p>How confidential are your discussions?</p> <p><i>Take into account: work ethos, networking to help find answers and support, what would you feel uncomfortable about?</i></p>	
<p>How are you going to record and reflect on your progress?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ What worked and why ✚ What not worked and why ✚ What was gained <p><i>Take into account; how you work best, what you are likely to use - a diary, a worksheet, a session sheet?</i></p>	

Keeping going

Questions and issues	Your agreement
What would you do if you encountered a problem in the buddying process?	
How could you help each other say if it starts to feel a bit uncomfortable or not quite right?	
Where would you get support if you feel unclear about what to do?	

Ending

Questions and issues	Your agreement
How will you know when its time to stop?	
<i>Take into account; your feelings, how useful it is for you, other priorities on</i>	

<i>your time and energy</i>	
<p>When this happens, how will you inform the other?</p> <p><i>Take into account; a possible notice period, other person's feelings, ending as well as you can</i></p>	



The Black Country Take Part Pathfinder project is managed by Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council. It forms part of the Take Part Pathfinder programme which is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government and managed by the Community Development Foundation.