



# **Black Country Empowerment Group Reference Group Meeting**

**Monday 7 September 2009, 1.30pm-4.00pm  
The Savoy Centre, Dudley**

## **Participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Madeleine Wilson	Heath Town Community Forum
Eileen Ward-Birch	Wolverhampton Pensioners Convention
Geoff Hopkins	Tettenhall Tenants and Residents
Sue Solly	Dosti executive
Katherine Rogers	Dosti
Cath Cunningham	Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust
Dana Tooby	Wolverhampton Adult Education Service
Janet Hilken	St Thomas's Network
Maxine Makin	Dudley Local Involvement Network
Siobhan Lloyd	Dudley MBC Youth Service
Mohammed Hanif	Dudley MBC Cllr

## **Facilitators**

Sam Axtell	Wolverhampton Partnership
Lorna Prescott	Dosti
Richard Ashwell	Wolverhampton Learning Partnership

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Following introductions, participants has short discussions in two groups about what they know about the Black Country take Part Pathfinder, and what they would like to know.

### **1. Feedback from the last Reference Group meeting**

Sam Axtell briefly fed back on how input at the last Reference Group meeting is being used in the development and delivery of Pathfinder work.

#### **1. Work on buddying for learners**

Many of the issues raised at the last Reference Group will be incorporated into the ongoing buddying work, alongside the ideas gathered at the Take Part launch in March 2009. The pathfinder will be holding a buddying seminar in December.

#### **2. Indicators**

The indicators that were developed at the last session have been 'tidied up' and incorporated into the Take Part evaluation framework.

## 2. What can you contribute to the 'big picture'?

Lorna talked through current areas of work within the Pathfinder (see attached calendar), and asked participants to indicate ways that they could contribute or wanted to get involved. The following offers and expressions of interest were made.

### Learning Programme Oct 09-Apr 10

- Siobhan would like to apply to take part in this course
- Maxine is interested in the course
- Wolverhampton Adult Education Service can be used to promote events and courses to learners via Information Advice and Guidance and communication stream

### Learning Programme Facilitator Training

- Maxine is interested in this
- Janet would be interested in this but can't afford time to go on the learning programme, so what else would be good?
- Geoff is keen that learning reaches out to over 55's.

### Voice

- Maxine is interested in the Voice Facilitator Training
- Maxine would like Dudley LINK to work with Voice
- Geoff is hoping for more partnership working, especially with over 55's

### Buddying

- Dana is prepared to act as a buddy
- Janet could be a buddy
- Cath is happy to be a buddy
- Eileen is willing to be a buddy in relation to committee work - secretary etc.
- Siobhan can approach particular members of staff to see if they would be happy to buddy.

### Promoting Civic Roles

- Cath is happy to use a database of 300+ local people to promote civic roles
- There are lots of semi-civic roles in the NHS - lay board members, panel members (appeals, individual cases) - map roles? (Cath)
- Eileen would like to help to promote civic roles
- Geoff is keen that this reaches out to over 55's.

### Living Libraries

- Dana can recruit people to be 'living books'
- Eileen is willing to be a living book (voluntary work)
- Janet is willing to contribute - she would have to think about what
- Cath could find living books in Wolverhampton
- Cllr Hanif is interested in links to community cohesion
- Madeline is willing to be a 'living book' (School Governor, Community Involvement)
- Siobhan thinks it would be good to link Living Libraries work with Democracy Week (12 October) and Takeover Day (November) - the latter is a day in which young people shadow people in their roles, this is often in the public sector.

### 3. Joint Dialogue Sessions and Structured Dialogue Method

Sam gave a short presentation to introduce participants to the Structured Dialogue Method.

*Structured Dialogue Method (SDM) is an approach to storytelling circles designed to produce robust evidence (as opposed to 'anecdotes') which can be used in influencing policy. The method was developed in Canada and was applied mainly in public health. In this country it has been used by police and drugs action teams as a way of enabling the experience of service users and front line workers to be fed in to policy making. The method was refined by People for Action - who used it to help housing associations listen to the experience of their tenants. Most recently, Chamberlain Forum tested the technique with groups of residents and neighbourhood workers in different parts of Birmingham as part of the Resident University programme.*

*from chamberlainforum.org*

Participants discussed in two groups thoughts in response to the suggestion to use Structured Dialogue Method for Take Part Joint Dialogue work.

#### **Risks/concerns**

- We would need to manage emotion
- There would need to be clear groundrules
- It is important for everyone to feel safe
- There may be language barriers
- The topic is critical and it needs to come from the 'bottom up'
- We'd need to put success factors in like ensuring that the choice of venue is appropriate, the meetings are held at the right time and that transport is provided.

#### **Benefits/opportunities**

- There is great value in bringing together people who wouldn't normally meet.
- Web-based dialogue - blogs etc.
- If you have lots of small, personal changes, that can build to bigger change, but there needs to be a shift to begin with - this could help.
- Sue's (Gorbing's) written input was useful and resonated with people. People don't feel listened to.
- Let's capitalise on topics that make sense locally which we can capture (in Wolverhampton) through the communities of interest, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships, Youth Council and Pensioners Federation.
- Cath Cunningham can investigate issues through the work she is developing with the LNPs
- Like the idea of trialling this in Wolverhampton and seeing if it's right for us.

#### **Possible discussion topics**

- Consultation
- Campaigning
- Involvement in Aids and Adaptations Service in Dudley - specifically DMBC, DFTRA and ADC
- Traveller Community on Oak Lane site and Dudley MBC to discuss issues on the site
- Safety at bus stations - Dudley Youth Council currently working on this

- The potential disruption as the transport interchange is developed in Wolverhampton.
- Issues that can be influenced.
- Issues that make sense locally.

#### **Links to existing work/activities**

- Dialogue activities in Lye bringing together Muslims and Christians
- Structured Dialogue might be attractive to young people if the issue interested them, as this is different to asking them to commit to a forum which covers many issues and is more ongoing.
- Produce research briefings that can be fed in locally, regionally and nationally.

#### **Other comments**

- It can be difficult for some people who want to get involved in their community, but are employed in a local public service, so have a conflict of interest - this must affect a large number of people, as many local people are employed in the public sector. This could be affecting the number of active citizens in an area.
- To some extent this work is about embedding the idea of dialogue.
- Whatever the issue, we need to people with the skills to take part (particularly from the public sector) i.e. people who won't be defensive and we need everyone there who can be part of the solution.

## Black Country Take Part Pathfinder Calendar September 2009 - March 2011

	Sep-Dec 2009	Jan-Mar 2010	Apr-June 2010
Women Take Part Learning Programme	Final 5 sessions and visit to Houses of Parliament	Visit to European Parliament	
ABCD Learning Programme	Final 5 sessions		
Wolverhampton LINK programme	Course sessions 1-7	Course sessions 8-12	
Generic Learning Programme	Tasters: Sept Course sessions 1-6	Course sessions 7-12	
Buddying scheme	Promotion and workshop (Dec?) Direct approaches	Buddies matched to learning programme participants and meeting	
Learning Programme Facilitator Training	<i>3 from Dudley, 5 new from Wolverhampton, 1 from Sandwell, 1 from Walsall</i>		
Voice Facilitator Training (Nov)	<i>No new Dudley facilitators (4 currently active), 7 more Wolverhampton facilitators, 2 Sandwell, 1 Walsall.</i>		
Voice work	Dosti Executive	Dosti Executive Dudley Interfaith Network Dudley CVS	
Echo pilots	Dudley Children's Trust , Wolverhampton Supporting People, Wolverhampton PCT, Age Concern Wolverhampton		
Joint dialogue sessions		4 sessions between January and June - focus to be discussed at Sept 09 reference groups	
Promoting civic roles	Publicity development - to ensure we don't ignore issues which will affect those taking up roles	Promotion through libraries, volunteer centres, public and voluntary sector agencies etc.	
Living Libraries?	Plans in Sandwell, not linked to TP pathfinder. Explore links and potential in Walsall.	Planning Living Libraries events in Dudley. Investigate the potential for delivering a Living Libraries project in Wolverhampton.	Delivering Living Libraries events in Dudley linked to civic roles promotion etc.