

## Paper to Cheltenham Strategic Partnership

### Feedback from the Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities project and lessons learnt

10 December 2009

#### **Background**

In December 2008, the CSP agreed to support a bid for “Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities” funding to support a project that would work with people experiencing mental ill-health. As the project has now been live for 12 months, I thought it would be useful for partners to hear about what the project has achieved, what the lessons learnt are and how it will be sustained in the future.

I have attached the original proposal as reference.

#### **For further information, contact**

Richard Gibson  
Policy and Partnerships Manager  
Cheltenham Borough Council

Tel: 01242 235354

Email: [richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk)

# Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities 2008 – 2010

## 'Working towards Work' - Cheltenham

### Introduction

The LSC has indicated that, in line with the Government's focus on increasing the UK employment rate and the aspirations set out in the Leitch Review of Skills (2006), NLDC activity should be directed towards supporting initiatives that help individuals compete in the labour market.

'The Social Exclusion Unit Report, 'Mental Health and Social Exclusion' (2004) identified adults with mental health problems as one of the most disadvantaged and socially excluded groups in society' (Mental Health & Social Inclusion Strategy for Gloucestershire). In acknowledging these barriers the LSC has requested that the current tranche of NLDC funding be directed towards identifying appropriate delivery mechanisms to strengthen the social and economic opportunities of individuals within this target group.

Adult Education in Gloucestershire has been requested by the LSC to take the lead on a partnership project that will provide the necessary support to those experiencing mental ill-health.

### Rationale

Cheltenham has a relatively strong economy, together with a more highly qualified resident base than the national average. However, in addition to a significant number of adults marginalised as a result of low skills, a further group experience social and economic barriers due to mental ill-health.

In 2004 there were over 3000 IB claimants, 48% of whom suffer either short or enduring mental health related issues. DWP Information Directorate figures (May 07) indicate that the areas of Hesters Way, St Marks, Oakley, Springbank remain high in terms of disability.

The partnership has identified that many programmes fail due to a lack of co-ordination and availability of appropriate support. Complex barriers experienced by this target group necessitate a collective approach to ensure engagement and commitment to any meaningful progression activities.

### Timescale

January 2009 – May 2010

### Target numbers

The project will engage with and support individual progression to a minimum of 50 participants

### Aims

- To address the needs for 'pre-vocational' support, targeting:
- Individuals who may or may not already be accessing mental health services
- Individuals who may or may not have received a diagnosis
- Individuals who may consider that existing services are inappropriate to their needs

### Proposed Methodology

The focus of the project is to improve the social and economic opportunities of those experiencing mental ill health, residing in Cheltenham Borough. The project has been designed to utilise the skills and expertise of a diverse partnership in delivering a holistic approach to the needs of the individual. The partnership also acknowledge the importance of linking into existing community based services and organisations to ensure integrated delivery.

Project delivery will consist of three phases:

#### Phase 1

The project will source participants in two ways:

- Outreach provision to be delivered by People & Places.

One half-day per week to be spent in five identified centres:

- Stonham
- Hesters Way Resource Centre
- Oakley Resource Centre
- St Paul's Medical Centre
- Centre in town (to be identified)

A review will take place after three months as part of the monitoring process. It is anticipated that venues will change during the course of the project.

Referrals will be taken from partner organisations, eg Cheltenham Borough Homes, GP Surgeries, Police Community Support Workers, Artlift Project, GDAS, Children's Centres together with additional voluntary/community and statutory agencies.

Each participant will subsequently:

- Be 'triaged' by People & Places
- Receive low level information and advice in relation to learning with associated short term goal setting
- Appropriate on going support according to individual need related to the above:
- Discussion sessions
- Individual or small group activities
- Drop In
- Practical assistance
- Mentoring

## **Phase 2**

The second phase of the project will run concurrently with Phase 1. In this context, an NLDC Support Worker will work with both People and Places and Cheltenham Volunteer Centre to:

- Embed relationships with nominated staff in partner organisations to ensure the cultivation of a 'wrap around' service
- Provide additional specialist intervention
- Mentoring
- Provide 1:1 support to address issues related to confidence and motivation
- Support access to experiential opportunities
- Discrete learning
- Support access to related opportunities in partner organisations
- Developing volunteer opportunities

## **Staff Training**

Phase 2 also incorporates awareness raising and training to staff where their main remit is not to support those with mental health issues, but where there is contact with potential participants. It is, therefore, important for such workers to have a basic understanding to ensure engagement and to support the continued delivery of the project.

## **Phase 3**

This phase of the project will be delivered via the NLDC Support Worker:

In supporting the progression of individuals into existing vocational/ educational routes  
Continue to work with Cheltenham Volunteer Centre to identify and deliver volunteering placements

Continue working collaboratively with support/key workers in partner organisations

Any referrals deemed inappropriate for this project will be referred to the most relevant organisation.

Although employment is unlikely to be an immediate outcome for many of the participants, consideration has been given to the challenges presented by the current economic climate.

'Vocational' taster sessions and volunteering will, therefore, be introduced to provide experience and knowledge of a work based environment.

### Outcomes

- 50 participants experiencing mental health issues will have received a service designed to individual need
- 50 participants will, on an individual basis, have progressed beyond their initial point of contact with the project.

In order to measure outcomes of the project and capture the sensitive nature and subtle changes in engagement, a measurement tool(s) will be created jointly between interested parties. This will be used to monitor changes in levels of engagement, demographic information, soft and hard outcomes.

The project will provide additional benefits of promoting social integration, reducing isolation and equipping individuals with the necessary life skills to make appropriate choices for the future.

### Management

Overall management of the Project will be undertaken by Adult Education in Gloucestershire. A Steering Group will meet on a bi-monthly basis to monitor progress. (See Appendix for details)

### Reporting

Reporting will take place on a quarterly basis, with a Final Report at the end of the project.

This project provides a unique opportunity for partner organisations, both voluntary and statutory, to work together for the first time. The proposal provides a more coherent model of delivery for participants in acknowledging and addressing gaps in services as identified by partners. Through a wide partnership base (see diagram) we are seeking to provide a collective response to the needs of this target group.

### Budget

People & Places	£35,000
NLDC Support Worker (inc on costs)	£12,000
Cheltenham CVS (support placement)	£ 4,000
Transport	£ 2,000
Discrete learning activities	£ 8,000
1:1 activities	£ 3,000
Volunteering costs	£ 2,000
Venues	£ 1,000
Refreshments	£ 1,000
Contingency expenses	£ 6,000
Total	£70,000