

Berkshire Community Learning Network – Small Steps to Big Voices

Introduction

This Paper

This paper reports on the outcomes of the Small Steps to Big Voices Project (December 2007-March 2008) which aimed to establish local partnerships in Wokingham and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, to engage with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities to develop a greater understanding of educational needs within the wider needs context.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was;

- To facilitate greater understanding of educational needs within the wider needs context
- Through initial engagement identify appropriate mechanisms to provide ongoing educational and wider support within the context of local delivery framework and policies
- To explore the potential for development opportunities for sustainable longer term working with one of the most at risk communities within the county

Process

The combined Community Development and Education Model underpinned project activity which can broadly be identified as:

<p>1. Initial meetings to increase knowledge and understanding of partners perspectives, inclusive of both historical, current and planned community projects and family learning engagement with the GRT (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller) communities and potential for future engagement.</p>	<p>Wokingham Life Long Learning Team/WBC Community Development/WBC Community Visits: Gorse Ride Rainbow Park Twyford Orchards Site Twyford Orchards Youth Club Carter's Hill Site New Acres Site Pine Ridge Site Aborfield Site</p> <p>RBWM Lifelong Learning Windsor Housing Datchet Youth Club Datchet Site Gypsy Roma and Traveller Network</p>
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2.	The development of a delivery model based on a West Berkshire established GRT educational service provision	CCB Education & Inclusion Team
3.	On the ground initial mapping in terms of geography, current provision alongside success and challenge/barrier identification	CCB Education & Inclusion Team Community Development Workers (CDW) along with existing on the ground delivery team link up as appropriate
4.	On the ground first step community engagement and involvement in delivery planning as appropriate	CCB Education & Inclusion Team CDW'S community visits
5.	Trial delivery to validate delivery model and capture self-defined wider needs through the provision of culturally appropriate learning/engagement opportunities	Wokingham 28.01.08 Carter's Hill Site 05.02.08 Gorse Ride 12.02.08 Carter's Hill RBWM 02.02.08 Datchet Site 10.03.08 Datchet Site
6.	Review and evaluation of the need and current potential for sustainable delivery in the longer term	CCB Education & Inclusion Team evaluation utilising meeting notes, process diary and the in house engagement model Planned post project meetings to consider specific location initial needs analysis alongside appropriate scoping & supporting funding agenda
7.	Share and develop good practice alongside the promotion of collaborative working	- Meetings & collaborative working - CCB's Making the Links Workshop based on the Harder to Reach Delivery Model/27.02.08 - Inclusive input into the development of Best Practice Guide's for Working with the Harder to Reach

Key Issues:

- Need for children's provision in line with Every Child Matters
- Adult literacy and ICT support to enable support of children's development
- Need for wider support with engagement with official forms and letters
- Need for support with driving test theory practice
- Need for cultural activities and wider link up regionally and nationally in terms of communication pathways
- Need for employment support particularly amongst 14-19 age group

Outcomes

Key salient lessons learnt:

1. The identification of GRT individual's/communities within wider housed communities needs further consideration in terms of the indicators used (often a lack of ethnic monitoring) and the potential negative implications of the process for those involved.
2. The need to consider the level of integration of GRT individuals/communities within the wider community and the implications in terms of equitable access to and the delivery of services.
3. The benefit of realising opportunities to add value through utilising existing knowledge, understanding and practice to develop provision to extend reach with a key focus on sustainability.
4. The need to consider previous local initiatives to ensure that activity is aware of both the factors which were successful and unsuccessful and the inherent additional barrier reduction/creation.
5. Whilst considering the best fit approach to the establishment of local partnerships, the focus on self-defined need often within a multiple needs lived context with associated salient prioritisation, offers a higher degree of success.
6. That a clearly identified engagement framework underpinned by a knowledge and understanding of the lived context of the GRT communities, alongside an awareness of the broad service delivery network with clearly identifiable progression pathways both identifiable and viable is vital.
7. An awareness of the associated costs and capacity implications for short term engagement within an often duplicated and competing current service delivery framework and complex wider context has implications for medium and long term sustainability with the Harder to Reach .
8. The need to consider a best fit approach to partnership, based on evidence of need gained through interaction with a broad based agenda matched by the development of an appropriate network to meet those often multiple and interrelated needs to ensure an effective approach which adds value through collaboration.

Conclusion

The opportunity to initiate local partnerships to establish a greater understanding of the local context within the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Wokingham Borough provided a best fit platform from which to realise outcomes for this project and add value through the development of a delivery model based on an established West Berkshire GRT service.

Initial needs analysis and the evaluation of this first step engagement has provided key information which can inform a longer term vision and the establishment overtime of a local partnership which can respond more effectively to the needs of one of the most at risk communities within the county.

Recommendations

- To clearly identify the purpose of future community engagement in the short, medium and longer term to ensure that whilst attempting to reduce barriers to equity of access additional barriers are not created
- To consider future engagement which has a broad based agenda with a key focus on enabling the establishment of trust, ongoing identification of and engagement with need
- To identify the existing potential for self-support within the current community infrastructure
- To grow existing community self-supporting systems to increase community capacity and ensure that consideration for the cultural context is embedded within practice
- To identify a number of key partners to work collaboratively to progress unmet need through supporting access to existing service provision and the development of new provision where clear gaps are identified.
- To ensure sustainability of integrated access to service provision through continued sharing and encouragement of good practice alongside monitoring and evaluation to ensure viability in the short, medium and longer term
- To continue to develop existing knowledge, understanding and practice through realising ongoing learning opportunities presented through collaboration and partnership working with harder to reach individuals, communities, service providers and wider partnerships