

# Partnership progress

The Solihull Partnership



One Borough: an equal chance for all

The Solihull Partnership quarterly newsletter for members of the Solihull Partnership

Winter 2011

## A word from the editor...

**N**ovember is turning out to be a very busy month indeed! Over the last week or so, I have taken the opportunity to get really involved in the Partnership's 'Festival of Ideas', you will find more details on page two.

The festival has been a real opportunity for me along with many others to see first hand how our services work with those families in Solihull who face the most complex problems. As well as seeing the really good work that is going on, it is also clear that there are things that just get in the way causing frustration and

delays. The follow up workshop, on 24 November will, I hope, secure personal commitments from everyone attending to breakdown the unnecessary barriers that prevent us from collectively supporting these families to have improved opportunities and outcomes.

The last few months have also seen some significant strides forward on community involvement in shaping local services. We now have four resident-led partnerships established in north Solihull who are shaping local



services in their area. While these are still early in their development, the potential to make a difference to the outcomes for people in those communities is huge. The commitment to succeed is underlined by the willingness to learn from others. I hope you will join me in reading more about this in this issue and other partnership activities in Solihull.

Melanie Lockey  
Head of Partnership  
Commissioning

## Evolution: Partnership Assembly 2012

**W**e are pleased to announce this year's Partnership Assembly will take place on Tuesday 31 January at Solihull College, Blossomfield Campus, from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. Please save this date in your diaries as we look forward to seeing you there!

The theme for the evening is Evolution, focusing on how we can continue to strengthen our partnership working to progress our key priorities.

An ideal networking opportunity, the assembly brings together partners and a wide range of stakeholders, including elected members, to review progress against our priorities, and shape future partnership working through a selection of workshops.

Last year's assembly was well attended and well received with over



90% of delegates stating the workshops were good or excellent. The Economic Growth workshop was the most notable with local businesses and partners talking about employment and developing skills for our young people.

We do hope you will be able to join us.

For more information please contact **Hannah Colson** on (0121) 704 8258. Alternatively visit **our website** for booking details.

## Reporting

### Hate

### Crime

**W**e are determined to support people who have been affected by a hate incident, which is why we've set up 20 new independent reporting centres across the borough.

Introduced by the Safer Solihull Partnership, the centres are based within access points of a wider range of existing services like children's centres and community voluntary organisations. Their aim is to give both victims and witnesses a safe and supportive environment to report incidents. Find out more about your **local reporting centre**.

# Our work

## Healthier Communities & Stronger Communities

### Improving local life

**O**ver the past 18 months residents and service providers have been working together to help identify and tackle local issues.

We have developed four resident-led neighbourhood partnerships in Smith's Wood, Fordbridge, Kingshurst and Chelmsley Wood. Each neighbourhood partnership has held a 'listening event' to find out about their priorities, the results of which were used to draw up action plans.

Last month, a party of 11 residents and partners visited a resident-led partnership called the Beacon Project in Falmouth and a sister project in nearby Redruth. The residents wanted a closer look at how they had made their partnership work and how this could help develop their partnerships to address similar social and economic challenges.

**The Beacon Community Regeneration Partnership** was formed in 1996 to improve the local area. It is led by residents and includes a range of partners.

The Partnership secured £1million of grant funding which the local housing provider matched to improve local homes, providing affordable central heating, wall and loft insulation. Over 60% of the properties in the area were



modernised. Local services were also developed including a community gardening business.

The impact on outcomes has been significant with: a 50% reduction in crime rates; childhood asthma rates reduced by 40%; child protection registrations reduced by 42%; incidents of post-natal depression was down 70%; breastfeeding rates increased 30%; teenage pregnancies were reduced; and unemployment figures fell 71% amongst both men and women.

This was achieved because local service providers, and community and statutory agencies worked well

together in partnership. Along with a project co-ordinator, the residents determined the priorities – a community spirit developed, and a level of local pride restored.

June Mole, Solihull SUSTAIN Services Development Officer, says: "These are the results we want in our regeneration area which is why those involved in our community development work came along. The Falmouth and Redruth experience tells us that change demands a common vision and partnership quest, but must be led by what people want."

For more information please contact **Sarah Barnes** on (0121) 704 8347.

## Children and Young People

### Festival of ideas

**O**ver the past few months we have been looking at how to improve the way we work with our most complex families facing multiple problems in their daily lives.

We are running a programme of visits this month – known as the Festival of Ideas – to improve how services can work together including drug and alcohol services, family support and Children's Centres, access to psychological services etc, as well as assessment processes to help identify opportunities for developing the way we work with families across the borough.

Senior officers from across partner organisations, elected members and a wide range of practitioners are all taking part. This will provide a real opportunity to innovate the way services come together in Solihull to support these families, and drive our commitment to deliver a 'whole system' change to improve outcomes for families facing multiple problems.

Following the visits, a workshop is being held on 24 November, at Solihull College, to bring together what we've learned and secure commitment to lead a programme of improvements.

For more information on the **Festival of Ideas** contact **Sarah Barnes** on (0121) 704 8347.



## Stronger Communities

# New volunteer centre now open

**V**olunteering can play a significant and rewarding part in people's lives, which is why the Solihull Partnership has opened the borough's first volunteer centre in Chelmsley Wood.

The new centre opened on 1 August and is based at the Solihull Connect offices at the Bluebell Centre.

Working in partnership with Solihull Council, Solihull SUSTAIN and Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs (WAYC), the new centre allows volunteering to be promoted more effectively and volunteering opportunities made more accessible.

The centre provides both drop-in and appointment services between Monday and Friday from 10am to 1pm. Trained voluntary advisers are on hand to provide information and advice, help people identify suitable volunteering opportunities, and support them in their applications.

Organisations can also promote their volunteering vacancies, and access consultancy services for groups to develop and improve their ways of working with volunteers.

Trained Voluntary Adviser, Paula Coyle, says: "I am delighted to have been given this volunteering opportunity. As a former youth leader at Solihull Parish Council I was made redundant earlier this year and needed a platform to help get me back into employment. Providing a face-to-face service is very rewarding and I'm pleased to be working with young people again and giving something back to the local community."



If you're interested in becoming a voluntary adviser at the centre or to enquire about consultancy services, then please contact Volunteer Centre Manager **Maureen Shepherd** on (0121) 711 3148. Alternatively appointments with an adviser can be made by contacting the centre on (0121) 704 6789 or email [volunteering@svcuk.org](mailto:volunteering@svcuk.org)

## Healthier Communities & Children and Young People

# Young people make a difference



**T**he Children and Young People's Trust and NHS Primary Care Trust recruited a group of teenagers in April with the support of national charity **Changemakers** to develop work around sexual and mental health for young people in Solihull.

Katie Buckingham, aged 17, led on the mental health project with nine 'assistant commissioners' to raise young people's awareness of

mental health and combat the stigma often attached to it.

Following workshops with young people, the team worked with designers to create a resource pack to plug the gap in their knowledge. The resource pack, consisting of case study cards, posters and a CD of activities, will soon be available in schools, youth centres and colleges.

Jasmine Thomas, also aged 17, led the sexual health project with eight 'assistant commissioners' reviewing the quality of the sexual health advice provided by our **Just4You Clinics**.

Four clinics were assessed across the borough. Each clinic was asked to rate themselves on

a self-assessment form and also received a visit from a mystery shopper as well as being interviewed by the young people.

Clinics recently received feedback as to whether they were rated red, amber, green and the reasons for this along with suggestions for improvement.

Ben Lewing, Change for Children Programme Manager, says: "We have not only benefited from the enthusiasm and energy of the young people but their ideas will continue to make a lasting difference."

For more information about either of the projects contact **Laura Power** on (0121) 704 6430.



## Prosperous Communities

### Money talks

**G**iven the financial pressures people are under in these difficult times we are working hard to help people maximise their income, and reduce the effects of poverty across the borough.

We are actively promoting the benefits and services provided by **The North Birmingham Community Credit Union** (NBCCU), to all staff and residents in Solihull.

The aim of the credit union is to encourage its members to save regularly and/or provide loans to members at very low rates of interest. It is a profit-sharing, co-operative financial institution, owned and managed by the credit union members themselves.

NBCCU Manager Hilary Sams says: "The credit union is a fabulous provision that encourages safe and affordable saving and borrowing for all. It's a convenient and easy way to save as deductions can be made direct from your monthly earnings."

We are also looking for credit union champions. If you would like to help inform your colleagues and/or customers on the benefits of the credit union please contact **Solihull Action Against Poverty Team**.

Another strand of our Action Against Poverty Strategy is to tackle illegal lending. A series of roadshows for residents and partners took place in September and October to help people understand some of the problems victims of loan sharks may face, and how they can access support.

These events were supported by the NBCCU, Solihull Community



Housing, England's Illegal Money Lending Team and 'Sid the Shark'!

Other campaigns taking place include our MAORS – Multi-Agency Outreach Support Programme. Residents can continue to get information and advice from a range of partners from employment support to financial advice up until September 2012.

For more information contact **Rebecca Grant** on (0121) 704 6343.

#### Did you know?

- NBCCU has successfully been running for 23 years, with £1.1million of assets
- Membership consists of 1,900 adults and 400 children
- Low cost loans at 12.68% APR interest are highly competitive compared with credit cards (17 – 30%) store cards (25 – 35%) or payday loans (1000 – 4000%)
- Payback rates are 4 – 5 times lower than Provident and other doorstep lenders

### Warming up for winter

**T**o add some warmth to the months ahead, we are once again pleased to launch this year's Winter Warmth Campaign helping vulnerable people in Solihull.

Now in its fourth year, this successful campaign has helped many residents to stay warm and healthy through a dedicated **Winter Warmth Helpline** for those who need urgent help.

Last year, the campaign helped around 400 residents. In addition, 75 emergency heaters and 82 electric blankets were given to vulnerable people. Hats, scarves and gloves were also handed out, and as well as over 5,000 winter warmth information cards that had a temperature gauge to help check if your house was at a safe temperature.

This year's campaign aims to go even further with more partners getting involved, including npower and National Energy Action. Our purpose is to reduce the number of households in fuel poverty and 'excess' winter deaths, while providing appropriate

information and support when it's most needed.

In September, Solihull Council supported an initiative where residents could benefit from free loft or cavity wall insulation, managed by the Energy Saving Trust. Over 200 enquiries were received from residents and 87 installs have been completed to date.

In addition to this year's campaign, we will be hosting a dedicated event in Chelmsley Wood next month focusing on making your income go further. Partner organisations will be providing a money-management and debt awareness support service, as well as raising the profile of our **Credit Union** while tackling illegal lending across the borough.

For more information about this year's campaign and to download a copy of the Winter Warmth Temperature Information Card please visit [www.solihull.gov.uk/winterwarmth](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/winterwarmth)



#### Contact Information

If you have any comments and feedback about this issue we would like to hear from you. We're always on the look out for relevant articles, news and events for the newsletter, so please contact **Rav Jagdev** our Marketing and Communications Officer on (0121) 704 8117.