

'Good Practice' on equality and diversity in the workforce



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Table of Contents	1
Background.....	2
Introduction	3
Case Studies	
Changemakers.....	4
Action for Children (LGBT Issues)	5
Barnardo’s	6
‘Race’ Equality	7
Mill Grove Residential Centre	8
Voice Young People	9
Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN).....	10
Action for Children (Learning & Development).....	11
National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).....	12
The Children’s Society	14
Derbyshire Connexions.....	16
Recommendations	18
Future Developments	18
Appendix: Summary of Beacons Initiative Funded Projects	19-22

Background

Following last year's successful workforce research and development grants (funded by CWDC), Children England (in partnership with CWDC) were keen to showcase the 'Good Practice' in Equality and Diversity across the children's voluntary sector organisations. Children England is looking to promote examples of practice across the sector in a variety of forms – one of which is through this medium. Children England continues to work in partnership with the CWDC on this initiative.

Children England were looking for evidence of what voluntary sector organisations have been doing that has worked well, and that has enhanced their practice and contributed to the development of their workforce. Children England contacted many organisations across the VCS requesting their examples/case studies and following much hard work, have now produced this initial publication which draws together this work. This will be available on the resources section on the Children England www and hard copies can be drawn down from there or requested from Head Office. This is the beginning of sharing what currently happens, establishing some baselines and building from there.

In addition to this short publication, Children England has been able to offer Beacon Grants to help services further develop practice around equality and diversity which adds to service quality and aids staff development. These Beacon Grants were awarded in September 2009 and there is a list of the successful schemes at the back of this publication. To further share information and learning Children England have convened 2 Regional workshop events which will showcase the work of the Beacon Schemes for a VCS audience. These are taking place in December 2009 – one in Manchester and one in London

The Children England National Conference for 2010 will also focus on equality and diversity in the workplace. This will take place at The Queen's Hotel Leeds on Tuesday March 9th, with John Amaechi as keynote speaker.

Introduction

Equality and diversity is a cornerstone of the way in which the VCS practices, delivers its services and helps to develop its workforce. The association between equality and diversity, the VCS and best practice has been established for some time. The VCS works within many diverse communities and across the widest spectrum of service users – these are the experiences which help to inform and develop practice around equality and diversity.

There are many definitions and interpretations of equality and diversity. Equality is based on the legal obligation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. Equality protects people from being discriminated against on the grounds of group membership i.e. sex, race disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, or age.

Diversity for the workforce is about valuing and reaping the benefits of a varied workforce that makes the best of people's talents whatever their backgrounds. Diversity encompasses visible and non-visible individual differences. It can be seen in the makeup of your workforce in terms of e.g. gender, ethnic minorities, disabled people, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief etc. It's about where those people are in terms of management positions, job opportunities, terms and conditions in the workplace. It is about respecting the many and varied individual differences that together constitute the strength of your workforce and how this enables you to best deliver quality services that are of most relevance. Through this you draw on the widest possible pool of talent and positively motivate your workforce to achieve their potential and best meet the needs of your service users.

These underpinning characteristics are why equality and diversity are important in the workplace and why organisations across the VCS and other sectors place such emphasis on their relevance and contribution.

I hope you will find these case studies inspirational and that they provide you with more food for thought on how you might continue to work to improve the quality of your services and the development of your workforce through their application.

The case studies below reflect a snapshot of the hard and continued work that is being developed and integrated across the sector.

Rob Peach – Director
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1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

We have been running our community stream within the Future Leaders programme since 2001. We constantly feed case studies and examples through our policy work which is often tied in with bidding for Government and local authority/ statutory contracts. We have been influential in initiating the Citizenship curriculum in schools alongside a strongly youth led approach which led to us leading the feasibility for a National Body for Youth Leadership (now called Youth of Today) which we now co- deliver on a contract for the DCSF in partnership with National Youth Agency and 5 other partners.

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

The Future Leaders Communities initiative was developed since we identified the need for more grassroots work through our youth led teams on the ground and through working with more than 200 organisations per year since 1999.

3. How it has worked

It has worked and it is working. It is bridging geographical, social, economic, cultural and ethical gaps within the communities as well as connecting young people with more social engagement as well as some concrete employment opportunities

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

It is eliminating fear and barriers both socially and economically. It has brought a realisation often at the local level that young people have the ability to lead and can thus fully engage older and more diverse members of their community. – all by actually working with them.

1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

Action for Children is one of the UK's leading voluntary sector providers of children's services. We have 420 projects (April 2009), helping nearly 156,000 children, young people and families across the UK. We also support work in southern Africa, the Caribbean and Central America. Action for Children helps the most vulnerable children and young people in the UK break through injustice, deprivation and inequality, so they can achieve their full potential. We have adopted the Equality and Human Rights Commission strands of equality as a useful way of focusing on our equality and diversity work. During the last year we have prioritised improving our performance in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues.

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

In January 2009 we received feedback on our performance in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index (WEI). While pleased that we had improved on the previous year, we recognised that focused action on LGBT-related work could lead to significant improvements for current and prospective LGBT staff, volunteers and service users. The initiative was introduced and explored at a national one day staff conference jointly hosted by Stonewall in February 2009.

3. How it has worked

A key aim was for a clear set of actions that contained realistic stretch, that were measurable, and that would be meaningful to our staff and service users. An action plan was developed and discussed and endorsed by the Executive Management Team. Factors that helped this work include:

- i high-level leadership (it is sponsored and lead by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Executive Director of HR)
- i setting strategic targets (e.g. using significant improvement in our Stonewall WEI as a key performance indicator for the organisation, and reviewing organisational policies to ensure they are LGBT-appropriate)
- i setting operational targets (e.g. ensuring all job adverts carry the Stonewall Champions symbol)
- i engaging staff, volunteers and service users (e.g. supporting a staff LGBT group that acts as a sounding board for developing this work, and sharing widely resources and materials from LGBT youth organisations)
- i engaging with external partners (e.g. staffing an Action for Children stall at London LGBT Pride, and working with smaller charities supporting LGBT young people)
- i targeting the LGBT community (e.g. through a leaflet encouraging LGBT adoption, for distribution at Pride events)

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

- i raising the visibility of LGBT issues within the organisation
- i giving support to LGBT staff
- i improving our recognition in the LGBT community
- i demonstrating our commitment to equality and diversity to existing and prospective staff, volunteers and service users
- i building a platform for parallel work on other equality strands in the future.

1. How it has worked

The organisation’s Corporate Equalities Board has included LGBT issues around employment, service user “reach” and its communication strategy as one of its priorities within it’s current action plan. The most recent conference in October 09 focused on raising awareness around homophobic bullying, improving practice in responding to the needs of LGBT young people and LGBT parents, and developing mechanisms within Barnardo’s business planning framework to integrate LGBT issues into its developing “cultural competence” approach.

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

In 2001, following the first LGBT National Conference, and alongside the development of the Safe Zone posters, a group of individuals within the LGBT Forum produced a training pack and toolkit, designed to support services to develop action plans to ensure their working environments became “safe” for LGBT colleagues and service users. In the past 2 years, Barnardo’s has been included in the Stonewall Top 100 Index of Employers.

3. How it has worked

The organisation’s Corporate Equalities Board has included LGBT issues around employment, service user “reach” and its communication strategy as one of its priorities within it’s current action plan. A planned conference for October 09 will focus on improving and developing mechanisms within Barnardo’s business planning framework to integrate LGBT issues into its developing “cultural competence” approach.

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

The conference brought together LGBT and non LGBT staff, including managers at director level, across the organisation, to look at employee issues, further developing LGBT sensitive services, developing a PR and communication strategy and embedding LGBT cultural competence within the business planning framework.

1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

NCB's vision is to advance the well-being of all children across all aspects of their lives with an aim to reduce inequalities in childhood.

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

The 'Mummy's Black' training course was developed to help practitioners find ways to talk about issues that often cause discomfort and embarrassment. Although practitioners are often committed to equality and many workplaces and organisations have equal opportunity policies and schemes, there is less consistent 'on the ground' practice. There is also a legacy of people feeling scared that they might 'say the wrong thing' or 'offend someone', when mentioning skin colour and ethnic identity. If so, how do we answer children's questions about identity or recognise and deal with potential racist incidents? These issues are particularly pertinent to mixed race families and other families where there is visible ethnic differences in family members where often external scrutiny means that 'not noticing colour' is not an option.

3. How it has worked

The training has been delivered as open courses and also commissioned by local authorities. It is a series of activities delivered by trainers whose personal experience of living in mixed race families supplements the exercises and presentation. The training aims to reinforce the importance of personal identity to practitioners, tease out and discuss the difficult words and sticking points and place the learning within a policy and historical context.

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

The evaluations have generally been very good and the training has been particularly effective in providing a forum to discuss the use of words like 'coloured' and 'Paki'. The impact is particularly strong when participants share their own experiences and anecdotes that reinforce the importance of acknowledging difference and challenging negative behaviour. People who have attended open courses have invited us back to train colleagues.

1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

Mill Grove is a residential community based in East London. It is an extended family that has lived in the same houses for over a century, caring for children, young people and families as their gifts, potential and needs are best suited. Nearly ten years ago we were asked if we could provide “respite care” for a boy from West London. His roots are in Punjab and his family religion is Sikhism. He had Cerebral Palsy and his mother was stretched to breaking point. He came to stay for weekends at first; then for holidays. At some point over the years he and we now realise that he adopted Mill Grove as his own extended family. It is now his second home. He is twenty.

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

We have responded to his situation because our aim has always been to respond to the needs and gifts of each child (there have been over 1000 who have lived with us since 1899) sensitively and creatively. Rather than provide a specialist service for those with particular needs we live as a family and community adapting our life and premises in order to respond to the gifts and needs of each person and family. This is a model of care that works worldwide

3. How it has worked

The presence of this young man has transformed much of our life and understanding. We have completely reshaped the ground floor of our home so that he has a bedroom and bathroom en-suite (where we used to have our pantry/larder). We have adapted our lifestyle so that every person living here has developed an awareness of his strengths, gifts and particular needs. One of the young people has become his “manager” in producing a CD of Rap music at a local sound studio. He has been helped to travel with a degree of independence. He has come with us on holidays to North Wales and taken a full part in new activities including cricket, sailing. We are now finding ways of supporting a college placement. Since he turned 18 there has been no financial contribution towards his accommodation, keep, travel and so on. Mill Grove functions as a family where he is accepted as a member unconditionally.

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

It should be apparent that both the young man and our community have developed greatly over the ten years during which we have known each other. The CD album is entitled *Disability is my Ability*. This probably says it all. If not, then it is likely that my book would have been rather different had I not had the privilege of seeing love grow in and through his coming among us. We have been asked by people in the UK and internationally to describe the model...

- i The practical implications of this model and way of working include the following:
- i willingness to let the young person take control over a crucial area of his life (what he saw as his family, and where he lived);
- i readiness to make substantial adaptations to the way of life of the whole residential community with him leading the way;
- i a major adaptation to the building so that he could live on the ground floor with first rate facilities that he helped to design;
- i rethinking the boundaries between “workforce” and “clients” in that there was giving and learning by all.

1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

Amongst other services, Voice provides a community advocacy service on request to children and young people who are in need, looked after as well as care leavers. Voice consistently promotes practical child centred care through its helpline, community advocates as well as visiting advocates who provide regular advocacy support to children and young people in a wide range of residential settings.

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

Voice has developed non-instructed advocacy services for children and young people with disabilities including those with minimal communication ability, believing that ALL young people with disability should have equal access to advocacy services. This initiative has been developed to ensure that rights are upheld, individual quality of life is addressed and proper arrangements such as transitional plans are made and implemented regardless of disability or placement location.

Voice therefore ensures that the service is accessible to children with a wide range of abilities by:

- i Allowing sufficient time to ascertain wishes and feelings
- i Being mindful of disability needs when devising information about the service
- i Ensuring the service is flexible enough to include a range of abilities
- i Adopting mutually respectful relationships between the advocate and child

3. How it has worked

Voice therefore ensures that the service is accessible to children with a wide range of abilities by:

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- i Ensuring the service is flexible enough to include a range of abilities
- i Adopting mutually respectful relationships between the advocate and child

Our advocacy services are currently provided to children with disabilities in the following settings:

- i Children's homes for children with disabilities
- i Respite centres
- i Residential schools for children with learning difficulties
- i Children and young people with disabilities in foster care and in independent placements.

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

Though other people such as her Key workers and Social Workers often have views about what a young person needs, it is clear that young people benefit greatly from having an advocate with no other agenda than to address fundamental issues in respect of a young person's quality of life.

In conclusion, Voice provides non-instructed advocacy by combining a person centred approach, a right's based approach combined with what may be termed a watching brief and the role of an observer or witness.

1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

FbRN UK is the leading national multi faith network for community development, regeneration and social action. It reaches 10,000 individuals and projects, most of whom are working to improve life in their communities. In all the research done into faith based social action, work with children and families is one of the most often reported. This ranges from parent and toddler groups, and uniformed organisations through to Children’s Centres like the Springfield Centre

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

Working with diversity is an increasingly important aspect of the skills set needed for working with children. Many faith based organisations are working with children from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and also, like the Springfield Centre, with children from different faiths. It is important to remember that, even when children and staff are from similar backgrounds, diversity training is important. This has taken some time to be appreciated. We still need to work on this, so that it is not just children who grow up in a diverse community who are able to understand and engage with difference.

3. How it has worked

Birmingham City Council staff, in line with government policy and the Every Child Matters agenda needed to ensure that Children’s Centres were established in the most disadvantaged areas of the city. Sparkhill was chosen as a potential area for a Centre as it was one of the most deprived areas of the City. It also had a multi-racial and multi-faith community. The Springfield Project in the Sparkhill area was chosen because it already offered a range of high quality services and had a history of working with different faith communities. Set up as a Project of St Christopher’s Church, Springfield was the Church’s commitment to expressing Christian faith through practical action, but it was clearly not seen by them as part of an agenda for overt evangelism.

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

Factors’ contributing to the success of the Project include:

- i a high degree of trust between the partners
- i shared vision and values, in particular a concern with providing high quality services for children and families
- i key individuals acting as champions
- i the city council’s recognition of the Project’s faith foundations and the partners’ shared commitment to openness and flexibility
- i the existing relationship between the Church and the Mosque

1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

Action for Children has recently implemented a new equality and diversity policy, which sets out Action for Children’s commitment to promoting equality, managing diversity and working inclusively in all our planning and operations. It helps define our actions, behaviours and practices – as an employer, service provider and campaigning organisation

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

The policy is underpinned by a number of standards:

- i organisational arrangements
- i staff and volunteers
- i service development and provision
- i safeguarding
- i participation and stakeholder involvement.

3. How it has worked

Inclusion Groups, headed up by a senior manager within each Division and Country, have been established across the UK to address a number of cross cutting themes around:

- i customer care (including complaints)
- i equality & diversity
- i participation (including arts initiatives)
- i volunteering

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

The newly implemented policy will require Inclusion groups to identify SMART objectives to meet organisational equality and diversity standards and progress work which helps to embed equality and diversity best practice.

1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

NCVO is the largest general membership body for charities and voluntary organisations in England. Established in 1919, NCVO gives voice to over 7,000 member organisations; over one third (35%) of our members have an income of less than £100,000. Our work helps voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) become more effective and improves the environment in which they operate.

NCVO has recently attained the *Investors in Diversity* (IiD) standard at Level 2. NCVO has been awarded the *Positive About Disabled People* symbol and NCVO has held the *Investors in People* award for over ten years.

NCVO operates in a diverse and rapidly changing environment. Diversity provides opportunities for NCVO to grow and adapt by:

- Recruiting an increased and wider range of members;
- Better meeting the needs of existing members and wider civil society;
- Providing a lead to the rest of the sector
- Becoming an employer of choice;
- Creating a work environment that values and motivates its employees leading to improved performance, development and retention
- Increasing creativity and innovation

NCVO believes valuing diversity is morally right and has good business reasons for doing it

2. Why this particular initiative was developed

NCVO has always been committed to diversity and inclusiveness both within our own organisation and across the sector. By working towards and attaining 'Investors in Diversity', we were able to strengthen our existing diversity good practice. The award is a very public demonstration of our commitment to equality and diversity. By implementing these measures, in addition to our ongoing diversity practice, we ensure that it has practical expression in everything we do.

An organisation which has achieved the IiD standard:

- has an open and welcoming approach to people from different backgrounds
- recognises that diversity is a powerful force for the positive development of the organisation
- understands the need for continuous improvement in how it manages diversity and the close links to managing diversity and new opportunities
- appreciates that people are different but equal
- genuinely values diversity and uses it to go forward

3. How it has worked

We reviewed our diversity practices as part of the ongoing diversity journey. The IiD award enabled us to benchmark our achievements to date and identify areas which needed strengthening. As part of NCVO's IiD journey:

- Diversity steering group (formed over six years ago) took on the remit of attaining IiD

- i Developed and carried out a staff survey on diversity
- i Developed and organised training sessions to raise awareness
- i Designed posters, leaflets and presentations, to share NCVO's vision of diversity with all staff at team and department meetings
- i Diversity Champion appointed who is a member of the senior management team
- i Tailored questionnaires for primary stakeholders that we had identified, and contacted a range of people we work with.

From the information gathered, we developed and implemented an Action Plan to strengthen our existing diversity practices.

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

NCVO continues to improve its diversity practices and we recognise that the diversity journey means regularly monitoring and reviewing our actions and practices. Achieving liD is only one part of our commitment to diversity.

What we have achieved in terms of impact include:

Recruiting an increased and wider range of members

- i A recruitment plan was created to increase our reach and the diversity of our members
- i 3,000 NCVO members are small community groups
- i 65% of NCVO members are local, 35% national
- i Less than a third of NCVO members are based in London

- i Better meeting the needs of existing members and wider civil society
- i 6% of NCVO members are BAME orgs – doubled in the last 3 years and will continue to grow as we recruit our target of 5,000 community groups
- i We opened up membership to local and regional organisations
- i Free membership was created for community groups.
- i We expanded our membership to the wider civil society and are developing our international membership scheme

- i Providing a lead to the rest of the sector
- i Our Employment Practice Network continues to grow with over 1,200 members all with a focus on employment and equality and diversity good practice
- i National Centre for Diversity offer NCVO members a 5% discount on obtaining their Investors in Diversity standard.
- i Pictures on NCVO website include images which are 'alt tagged' ie when the cursor hovers over the image, a description appears in text – this is particularly useful for people who are partially sighted www.w3.org/WAI
- i We include a questionnaire relating to diversity in our tendering procedures

Becoming an employer of choice and creating a work environment that values and motivates its employees leading to improved performance, development and retention

- i NCVO recruitment application form (Name and other personal details detached from form) / Exit interview form updated
- i New HR Database – to verify and monitor more effectively employees' data
- i NCVO's liD journey highlighted in recruitment literature
- i HR induction and Managers' induction includes focus on diversity
- i Evaluation and ongoing improvement of training (diversity and disability awareness)
- i Diversity Training for NCVO staff, managers, senior management team and trustees

- i HR Remuneration Committee now how a diversity remit
- i Senior Management Team receive regular diversity reports
- i Our internal communications highlight cultural and religious events
- i Intranet has pages dedicated to diversity awareness and our liD journey
- i Reviewed and updated our *Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy* and our *Dignity at Work Policy*
- i Flexible working can be requested by all employees

Increasing creativity and innovation

We work hard to make sure all NCVO events and conferences are accessible to as many people and organisations as possible.

- i We will only hold events in fully wheelchair accessible venues.
- i Induction loops fitted into our reception area and four conference suite rooms (plus we have a portable loop)
- i Installed integrated beacons into the fire alarm system in the office to alert deaf/hard of hearing staff/visitors to an emergency
- i Prioritise parking spaces at NCVO's premises for disabled drivers
- i For NCVO events at a delegate's request, we can provide
 - o lip speakers,
 - o sign language interpreters,
 - o palantypists,
 - o induction loops,
 - o and printed materials in a range of formats (i.e. Braille, large print) as part of the service.
- i Diversity and equality issues have been an integral part of the Approved Consultant Directory for many years. We encourage all consultants who work with us and in the wider sector to develop policies and procedures to ensure that they work in an "appropriate and inclusive way"

NCVO's Workforce Development Team has produced a wealth of resources relating to employment practice and equality and diversity available online www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/workforce-development

Helen Leadbitter – Senior Project Worker

The Children's Society – Health needs of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

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1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area.

The Children's Society Include Project works across England influencing policy and practice for young carers and their families. For over three years the project has been developing good practice to meet the needs of young refugees affected by the health needs of their families.

Funded by the Department of Health the project has developed a good practice online resource for practitioners to support refugees with ill health and disability in order to prevent inappropriate caring responsibilities falling to their children and other members of the community. The Refugee Toolkit is a free tool for all practitioners in a position to support these families including Adults and Children's services, Health, Education and the Voluntary sector.

Available at www.refugeetoolkit.org.uk.

The project is recognised nationally as having expertise regarding the needs of these families and in improving information services, capacity and service delivery through training and information provision and resources.

The project continues to roll out learning across England through training and awareness-raising for professionals to increase awareness of the needs of refugee families, as well as promote access to the project's culturally sensitive information and practice materials in order to tailor sustainable services for families.

2. Why this particular initiative has developed.

The purpose of the Refugee Toolkit is to ensure that both adults and children who are seeking asylum or have refugee status have access to appropriate health and social care services in order to prevent their children taking on inappropriate caring responsibilities.

The resource has been developed for adult and children's services, education, health and other agencies in contact with refugee and asylum seeking families. Particularly those working with families affected by ill-health and disability and where there are young carers.

This resource was developed in response to identified barriers faced by refugees and asylum seekers when accessing health and social care services. These barriers were identified through consultation with multi-agency practitioners, adult service users from refugee communities and young refugee carers. These sessions were imperative to the identification of needs of these families, barriers faced by service providers when identifying and supporting their needs and providing solutions to these barriers.

In particular it was highlighted that practitioners lacked information and resources for supporting these families and identified a need for a central 'one-stop shop' resource that is free and easily accessible. The Refugee Toolkit was created in response to these consultations.

3. How it has worked

Practitioners from across England are informed about the Refugee Toolkit through national training sessions supporting local authorities to deliver the Every Child Matters outcomes for young carers and their families, the over-arching aim of the training is to ensure that young carers get a more responsive, whole family and needs-led service. Practitioners are also informed about the toolkit through e-newsletters and national strategic groups including the young carers coalition.

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

Through feedback from Health, Education, Social Services and the Voluntary Sector we are informed that the toolkit is having a great impact on service provision delivered to refugee families. Practitioners are better informed about the needs of these families and the impacts on their children and how to deliver holistic multi-agency services to prevent refugee children taking on inappropriate caring roles that impact upon their own well-being.

Care Services Minister Phil Hope has welcomed the Toolkit:

The Refugee Toolkit, developed by The Children's Society Include Project, is a timely and very thorough resource that will aid practitioners from across statutory and voluntary services, including health and education, to provide inclusive services for young carers and their families from hard to reach communities, including refugee and asylum seeking families, and work towards achieving this vision".

Feedback from Practitioners has included:

“It has made me aware of the diversity of young carers and feel I am able to empower them as I have more knowledge from using this toolkit”.

“By using the toolkit I am able to give the right advice to service users and it helps to refer them to other services”.

“It helps me stay up to date with healthcare advice for service users”.

“It’s useful for finding resources to use with them i.e. translators”

“I feel more confident about their entitlements and where to find out this information”.

“It’s useful for signposting to other agencies who can offer support”.

“I certainly have more things to think about and include in family assessments and links for signposting”.

Geoff Bright – Equality Manager

Connexions Derbyshire – Strengthening Equalities in Practice

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1. Brief statement describing the organisation and what it has done in terms of practice or policy to promote enhanced work in this area

Recognising and harnessing the energy, creativity, passion and commitment that marks the VCI sector in Derbyshire, the Partnership Development and Commissioning Team in the Children’s and Young Adults’ (CAYA) Department have developed an innovative equality project. Aimed at helping the VCI sector to meet the developing and rapidly changing needs of *all* the county’s communities the ‘Equality Champions’ project, first mooted in March this year, is set to unfold over the next six months.

2. Why this particular initiative has developed

The project is about strengthening equalities practice in service delivery commissioned from the VCI sector. While the needs of all equality groups will be addressed, the key focus will be on supporting those groups whose interests are often not fully represented in a shire county setting - such as Black and Minority Ethnic young people and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered young people. The idea is that key developments like Equality Impact Assessment and more general ‘equality proofing’ can be moved forward most effectively by committed individuals from *within* the VCI sector rather than statutory sector ‘experts’. Particularly if the VCI champions can be effectively linked to the knowledge base of those within the statutory sector who have the luxury of a ‘day job’ focusing on equality.

3. How it has worked

This is how the Derbyshire project will work. The champions will gain the skills – and hopefully be formally accredited for doing so as the project develops - to bridge the gap between the VCI sector and the sometimes challenging structures of the statutory sector. They will support assessment

processes and bid development as well as identifying and helping remove participation barriers. Most importantly, they will model and facilitate good practice from a position of established credibility within the sector.

Characteristically, the Derbyshire project is strong on partnership development. For example, the champions are volunteers from GRID, the county VCI reference group. Their development needs are being met by seconding in Connexions Derbyshire's Equality Manager as well as commissioning members of the two county BME forums to help them secure durable links with communities. Furthermore, key local support agencies such as the LGBT Group Derbyshire Friend will be involved in developing a 'toolbox' of information and support materials to support the champions in their work. Underlying the approach is a recognition by the Partnership Development and Commissioning team at CAYA of the need to provide 'backfill' resource when taking people out of an already stretched sector.

4. What it has achieved in terms of impact

By the end of the development phase Derbyshire Children's and Young Adults' Department will have a team of VCI equality champions linked into support from both equality practitioners in the statutory sector structures and staff from the VCI organisations working with marginalised and isolated groups. Through their work we will have a much clearer idea of what still needs to be done to ensure the widest take up of services, how to do it and whether it is effective or not.




Recommendations

The Case studies in this report provide a snapshot of the continued good work that is developing in the sector on equality and diversity. The case study examples showcase a range of activities that are from organisations of different types and sizes. They demonstrate what is achievable and how this impacts on workforce development and enhances service quality.

However, much of this often happens in 'silos' and is rarely shared across the wider sector. This also raises the question of how much good practice is happening out there in the VCS, of which we are unaware.

The challenges that we face are of working to ensure that all organisations have access to such models of good practice, so that they can consider their relevance to their own setting and how they might integrate such thinking into their own developments, in ways that are affordable and sustainable. This would then contribute to reducing any 'reinvention of the wheel'; demonstrate effective collaboration and co-operation and show how partnership is working within and across the sector. It is so important to utilise our resources in these times of recession and uncertainty, and to prevent duplication across the sector.

We suggest consideration of the following:

-  A common easily accessible data base of evidenced best practice, widely promoted across the sector; providing links to key people who have developed their practice and are able and willing to help others
-  Opportunities to share learning, ideas and initiatives in a range of ways at local, regional and national levels
-  A central source of advice and resources which is reviewed for accuracy and relevance

Future Developments

The background and introduction have set the scene for this publication. Hopefully this group of case studies will work to inspire others to further develop and share their practice and continue to 'raise the bar' in terms of how we best develop our workforce and deliver quality services to our users. Children England will continue to promote best practice and welcomes such examples. The 2 Regional workshop events in December 2009 will further build on what we know through the sharing of new initiatives developed through the Beacon Grant Scheme. The Children England national conference in March 2010 will take this to the next stage, by providing opportunities for wider sharing and engagement across the VCS.

No.	Name of Organisation	Contact Details	Key Contact Person	e-mail	Region	Charity Status & No:	Grant Cheque Sent	Letter of Acceptance Sent
1	Action For Children	Bristol Office, Horner Court, 637 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 OBJ	Mark Cartwright	mark.cartwright@actionforchildren.org.uk	South West	Registered Charity - Charity No: 1097940	12/10/2009* postal strike delayed return of grant acceptance	17/09/2009
<p><u>Project Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop a blended learning approach to equality and diversity to meet different learning styles of young people ▪ The implementation of the programme supports the launch of revised policy and procedures and standards in equality and diversity 								
2	BMETVFM Charitable Foundation	Prospect House, 2 Prince Georges Road, London, SW19 2PX	Ralph Brathwaite	preseident@bmetv.net	London	Registered Charity - harity No: 1099419	08/10/2009	17/09/2009
<p><u>Project Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aim to create opportunities for employment of predominately BME young people in the creative industries by providing access to training opportunities ▪ Producing a step by step DVD to promote the use of streaming media technologies to promote their own work on social issues effecting them 								
3	Children's Links	Holland House, Horncastle College, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincs, LN96BD T: 01597528300	Helen Hill	helen.hill@childrenslinks.org.uk	East Midlands	Registered Charity - Charity No: 1071058	08/10/2009	17/09/2009
<p><u>Project Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To undertake research primarily to investigate what attracts men into childcare and how their unique skills are utilised or otherwise ▪ Disseminate these findings at events to investigate how males are managed to maximise their impact on children's social representations of gendered society 								

4	Communities Empowerment Network	Office 20, Boardman House, 64 Broadway, Stratford, London, E15 1NT, 020 8432 0530	Deuan German	deuan.german@compower.net.org	London	Registered Charity - Charity No: 1099111	08/10/2009	17/09/2009
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Project Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide 4 one day training courses aimed at 4 of the highest school excluding Boroughs in London ▪ The courses will be entitled 'Education Advocacy' and 'School Exclusion and Reintegration' 								
5	KIDS	Suite 13, The Quadrant, 99 Parkway, Sheffield, S9 4WG	Lauren Roberts	enquiries@directshortbreaks.org.uk	Yorks & Humber	Registered Charity - Charity No: 275936	08/10/2009	17/09/2009
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Project Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KIDS work with disabled children, young people and their families providing home learning, specialist youth groups, parent partnerships and playwork inclusion projects ▪ They aim to promote and develop gender equality and diversity in the workforce 								
6	Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre Children's Zone	4 Princes Road, Liverpool, L8 1TH T: 0151 709 8162	Lygia Warren	lygiawarren@kuumbaimani.org.uk	North West	Registered Charity - Charity No: 1091041	08/12/2009	17/09/2009
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Project Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuumba Imani Children's Zone is a fully inclusive afterschool play scheme service based in one of the UK's most deprived areas of Liverpool 8 • Plan to capture the work of staff and volunteers by producing an equality and diversity activity calendar. It will explain in narrative and visual what the learning experience has provided 								

7	Persona Doll Training	51 Granville Road, London, N12 0JH T: 020 8446 7056	Babette Brown	personadoll@tiscalli.co.uk	London	Registered Charity - Charity No: 1099315	08/12/2009	17/09/2009
<u>Project Summary</u>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persona Doll offers an innovative training programme providing trainers and practitioners a non-threatening way to explore, uncover and counter discrimination and promote equality Culturally authentic life-like cloth dolls are given their own individual personas. The narrative deepens the awareness and understanding of children and young people about equality and diversity 								
8	Right Track	Right Track National Initiative, 4-6 Pennywell Road, Unit 3 The Old Malthouse, Bristol, BS5 0TJ, 0117 935 1515	Thomas Blower	tbb@childsoc.org.uk	South West	Registered Charity - Charity No: 221124	08/12/2009	17/09/2009
<u>Project Summary</u>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A VCS project which provides support and guidance to young people from a Black and Minority Ethnic background that are at risk of involvement in, or already involved in youth justice Seek to promote the development of new and innovative practice in equality and diversity at regional training courses 								
9	Somerset Kaleidoscope Project	36 North Street, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 8LT T:01823 667527	Fiona Gaffa	admin@somersetkaleidoscope.org	South West	Company Limited by Guarantee No: 6510022	14/12/2009* awaited return of Co. accounts	17/09/2009
<u>Project Summary</u>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We provide a forum for children and young people to come together and to just be who we are proud of our culture despite other's concepts of race, ethnicity and colour</i> <i>The project we are applying for uses multimedia formats and the internet as a way of connecting and communicating with our members</i> 								

10	The Feminist Webs Project	c/o ICA:UK Unit 14, 41 Old Birley Street, Manchester, M15 5RF T: 0161 232 8444 M: 0781 398 1338	Amelia Lee	Amelia@ica-uk.org.uk	North West	Registered Charity - Charity No: 1090745	08/12/2009	17/09/2009
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Project Summary

- Seek to develop strong communities, participation and sustainable development through training, facilitation and special projects with a North West focus.
- Support and encourage the workforce working with young women that challenge gender stereotypes and enable young women to increase their aspirations and opportunities