

# Helping Create a Disability Network for Sheffield

dass deaf advice service sheffield

offer

imby

Speaking Up or Advocacy

10th May 2009

offer

## A Low Carbon Sheffield Making it Real!

Launching the VCF Environment Network - a low carbon city with wellbeing for all

Date: Tuesday 7 April, 2009  
Time: 9.30am for 10am start till 1pm for lunch  
Sorby House, 42 Spital Hill, Burngreave, Sheffield, S18 7TG

## Getting ready for Community Assemblies

The latest on their development and how to influence them

Date: 8th December 2008  
Time: 9.30am for 10am start, 10am-2pm with lunch  
Sheffield, S1 1HA

# Supporting the VCF Sector to make a difference for Sheffield...

**OFFER activities 08/09**



## How your city works

making it work for you

## Preventing Violent Extremism

Winning hearts and minds?

Two linked events examining the Preventing Violent Extremism strategy and ways of working with partners to influence its delivery in Sheffield

10th February & Monday 16th March 2009  
Start from 10am-2pm including lunch  
Sheffield, S4 7YE

## Skills and tools to increase our impact in Community Assemblies

Date: Friday 27th February 2009  
Start till 1pm for lunch

Welcome to our **OFFER activity report 'Supporting the VCF sector to make a difference for Sheffield'** which provides a few 'headlines' of what we did to support our sector to be influential in 08/09, and what this support helped make happen.

**Our Mission Statement...** OFFER exists to support VCF organisations and networks to work in partnership and strategically influence the creation of successful inclusive communities in Sheffield.

**Our six key roles...** To achieve our mission OFFER undertakes the key roles on the following page.

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## Role 1: Pages 4 to 7

To ensure the VCF sector is effectively represented and able to participate as an equal partner within decision making structures.

## Role 2: Pages 8 to 10

Encourage and facilitate effective networking, consultation and strategy development opportunities within the VCF Sector, to enable true partnership working with other sectors.

## Role 3: Pages 11 & 12

Ensure the highest quality information is available and accessible to the VCF sector to enable it to shape and take advantage of regeneration opportunities.

## Role 4: Page 13

Understand [VCF sector] needs identify gaps and priorities and build a case to influence investment decisions.

## Role 5: Page 14

Secure and allocate available resources to support the mission statement.

## Role 6: Page 15

Ensure that OFFER is robust, well-managed and fit for its purpose.

# Role 1: Key activities

**'To ensure the VCF sector is effectively represented and able to participate as an equal partner within decision making structures'.**

- Following the restructure of the **Sheffield First Partnership** [the Local Strategic Partnership] OFFER successfully negotiated a protocol with the City Council to ensure the principles behind our sector's involvement were continued and strengthened. The protocol proved invaluable in securing the current levels of VCF representation across all Boards, so ensuring our sector can influence for positive change in Sheffield.
- OFFER enabled opportunities for our sector to influence the development of the **Community Assemblies** by hosting a specific VCF Community Assembly reference group & securing the involvement of the key Sheffield City Council Community Assembly 'architects' to engage with this process.

We also delivered a **range of training** to help Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector reps be influential. Some headlines:

- 48 people attended 'How Your City Works' [HYCW]– a course which aims to supports people to understand structures that oversee the City so they know where to channel their voice and influence effectively.
- Building on the success of an OFFER 'How Your Neighbourhood Works' pilot in 2007 [similar to HYCW's but with a more 'local' perspective] Sharrow Community Forum went on to use this as a basis to further develop and deliver 'How Your Neighbourhood Works' courses targeted at specific communities in their area. Over 100 people have participated, many going on to active community involvement.
- 21 people attending a Faith Leaders, Workers and Volunteers Training Course [the course was 3 x oversubscribed 77 people applied]. This Sheffield NIACE [National Institute of Adult Continuing Education] pilot, run in partnership with the Pakistan Muslim Centre, was recognised nationally as an example of good practice, enabling people from different faith communities to build relationships and mutual respect through learning alongside each other. It built confidence, knowledge and skills in leadership, faith & diversity and community development. A key quote from a participant - "we got to the point where we trusted each other enough to discuss the issues."
- 16 people attended a specific Faith Awareness Training Day.

## **Partner perspective: Karl Barton, Sheffield First VCF rep on the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership Board**

The Sheffield First Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership is a new board resulting from a merger of the Safer Communities and Successful Neighbourhoods Partnerships. I was a member of the Safer Communities Partnership and saw it develop over time to the point where the VCF representatives made a difference in making strategy reflect people's needs. Some examples:

As part of the merger process we made a difference by ensuring there should be six rather than three VCF representatives on the new Board, and gained agreement that Communities of interest attend pre-meetings and get minutes, agendas, and board papers from the partnership team.

Since the merger we have gained agreement that there should be a VCF representative in the role of Vice Chair for the Partnership, and that there should be a VCF representative on the Performance Planning and Resource Group sub group that makes detailed recommendations to the Board on expenditure.

OFFER Liaison staff have played a key role in facilitating and negotiating changes through canvassing the views of communities, drawing together Communities of interest to take part, gathering information, and ensuring there is effective communication between both the representatives on this Board, and between VCF reps on all Boards via six monthly cross partnership events.

## **Partner perspective: Chris Venables, Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group**

I think the **'How Your City Works'** course was excellent. It taught me a lot about how Sheffield works and showed me how I could get more involved. Looking back I've achieved all the goals that I can remember including:

- Developing contacts / keeping in touch with city-wide initiatives – [I find your OFFER emails very helpful].
- Finding out more about what's going on locally so that NENG committee members and readers of our EDGE magazine are aware of other things they can do / other events they can get involved in - we're about to undertake Street Force's graffiti clean-up training.
- Linking up with other Forums – Ecclesall Forum and NENG now exchange minutes and share information.
- I helped establish a quarterly Farmers' Market in Nether Edge – our first Farmers' Market / Easter Fair was a super success and we sent over £750 to Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice.
- Trying to share / delegate more - I had started to run the show, but now seem to be getting more volunteers to take on different aspects e.g. graffiti clean-up.
- To join a political party – I have done (although my work with NENG has to remain apolitical).

# Role 2: Key activities

**Encourage and facilitate effective networking, consultation and strategy development opportunities within the VCF Sector, to enable true partnership working with other sectors.**

- OFFER support enabled the development of NEW networks:
  - Sheffield Low Carbon Network
  - Sheffield BME Network [now independent]
  - Sheffield Disability Network
  - Sheffield Community Economic Network [SCEN]

**& provided continued support for existing ones:**

  - Sheffield Faiths Forum
  - The Learning, Skills and Employment Reference Group

& the Sheffield First VCF rep Cross Partnership network events, which provide a key twice yearly opportunity for the reps, Sheffield First Partnership Board Officers and VAS and OFFER liaison officers to discuss cross cutting partnership issues.
  
- We also hosted a number of networking events across a range of topic areas – the cover of this publication tells this story for us...

## **Partner Perspective: Jaquie Stubbs, Independent Living Sheffield [ILS].**

The newly formed Disability Network for Sheffield is the coming together of user-led disability organisations and groups to have a collective voice on issues of relevance to disabled people and to increase their influence within the city. Our first AGM will be happening in Feb 2010.

The development process for this was that OFFER and ILS hosted a task group which did the groundwork to enable; a 'Sheffield disability network model' to be adopted, and a constitution to be formulated and approved by a wider group of user-led and other disability groups/organisations. Having a disability network in Sheffield is crucial at this time, with 'personalisation' being the focus of the day along with major changes taking place which will transform social care, we need to ensure that disabled people and their organisations have voice and influence about developments in the city.

OFFER's contribution to the process has been invaluable. OFFER brought both a broad range of experience of working with and establishing other networks, together with expertise to help us work through any tricky issues involved in establishing the network. OFFER helped us reach a wider audience, and gain feedback at every stage to help ensure people were fully aware of, and signed up to the process, which has enabled the network to move forward.

## **'Preventing Violent Extremism' a Community Response led by Sheffield Faiths Forum and the emerging BME Network.**

In spring 2009 OFFER supported Sheffield Faiths Forum and the emerging BME network as they took the brave step of leading on two events to enable people to discuss the national Government's Preventing Violent Extremism Programme and decide if they wanted to engage with it in Sheffield.

As a result a strong message was sent to the Police and City Council about how the agenda should be approached in Sheffield, expressing unhappiness at it being targeted at Muslim communities. This, together with feedback from the rest of the country, has resulted in the national Government broadening the scope of the programme.

The City Council, valuing the input of a range of community groups and individuals, asked Sheffield Faiths Forum and the BME network to set up a longer-term advisory group to continue to influence the delivery of the programme. Following a publicity campaign 12 people from a variety of backgrounds were recruited, with the responsibility of feeding information and views back and forth to the wider community.

The Advisory Group meets monthly to give a local perspective, and is working with the City Council and Police to develop a protocol to allow effecting and ongoing communication as the strategy develops.

OFFER continues to give support, posting regular updates on its website and sending information to people who have expressed an interest in the agenda and wish to be kept informed.

# Role 3: Key activities

**Ensure the highest quality information is available and accessible to the VCF sector to enable it to shape and take advantage of regeneration opportunities .**

- Developed & maintained our OFFER database and questionnaire to enable us to distribute timely and targeted information of relevance to VCF sector organisations and other partners.
- Distributed large numbers of individual 'bits' of information of relevance to the VCF sector, from both OFFER and external partners. OFFER provides a key way for partners to communicate with VCF sector organisations, which in turn enables us to keep our sector informed of developments and opportunities.
- Developed and distributed our newsletter 'Regeneration News' which worked hard to keep our sector up to date with developments, in particular the development and implementation process of the Community Assembly model. We also featured an interview with the new leader of the City Council Paul Scriven, and a further one with the Chief Executive John Mothersole, to get their 'take' on the role of our sector in voice, influence and regeneration.

## More role 3 activities

- Introduced a range of e-bulletins including:

A Sheffield First one with news from across all the Boards that make up the Sheffield First Partnership highlighting the contribution our VCF sector reps have made.

A Community Assembly one which initially concentrated on the development and implementation process, but more latterly provides an insight into how VCF sector organisations in the different Community Assembly areas are involved with their individual Community Assembly structures and processes.

Since being introduced 153 people have signed up to receive the SF bulletin, & 359 for the Community Assembly one with numbers continuing to grow. A further SCEN [Sheffield Community Economic Network] e-bulletin was introduced in summer '09 which 168 people have so far signed up to receive. All bulletins are also published on our website.

- Produced a range of creative flyers to attract and encourage Sheffield VCF sector reps to attend OFFER networking & training events.
- Continued to develop our OFFER website [www.offer.org.uk](http://www.offer.org.uk)

# Role 4: Key activities

**Understand [VCF sector] needs identify gaps and priorities and build a case to influence investment decisions.**

- Helping raise the profile of Community Forums and Community Anchor organisations with Sheffield City Council. Some secured funding from Area Based Grant; some from their Community Assemblies; whilst not all secured funding it allowed an opportunity for these organisations to demonstrate the impact of their work to the City Council.
- Whilst ultimately, Yorkshire Forward had very clear views which were not open for negotiation on how Single Pot European Regional Development Funds were to be used in Sheffield, throughout 08-09 we worked with members of the Sheffield Community Infrastructure Partnership to try and influence Yorkshire Forward's thinking. This influence did however help inform the Council's thinking on the differing roles of VCF sector networks and consortia, and helped to secure continuation of the support to VCF sector organisations in setting up consortia delivered by VAS.
- With the ending of Yorkshire Forward direct investment in our sector we were able to transform the old Sheffield Community Infrastructure Partnership into a much wider, more open network called Sheffield Community Economic Network [SCEN] beginning April 09. SCEN has already been able to contribute and influence the delivery of the Future Jobs Fund in Sheffield, and the Sheffield Employability Programme.

# Role 5: Key activities

**Secure and allocate available resources to support the mission statement.**

- For 2008/09, OFFER secured resources for its work from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and Area Based Grant [allocated through Sheffield City Council] and from the Capacity Builders 'Improving Reach' programme.
- OFFER also allocated funds to Community Forums to undertake; both a mapping exercise of local Community organisations, and to facilitate the bringing together of Faith Communities in their area. A key outcome of this work was that the local Faith Communities brought together by Parson Cross Community Forum took the unprecedented step of pooling resources to employ a Community Development Worker for the area. The process 'started faith communities talking about how they could unite in a common purpose that would benefit them all' [a comment from the outcome report].

# Role 6: Key activities

**Ensure that OFFER is robust, well-managed and fit for its purpose.**

For OFFER to work towards its 'mission' of supporting & increasing VCF voice and influence for public benefit in Sheffield its important we've got a positive working environment and systems in place... so over 08/09 we:

- Continued to work towards achieving the PQASSO level 2 quality standard – practically this involved the implementation of a new financial management system, ensuring employment policies and procedures were up to date and rolled out, and continued support for trustees through our programme of induction and regular skills audit.
- Worked hard to determine future funding in support of our mission statement - which led to securing further Area Based Grant funding for 09/10.

A quote from Roisin Birks on the value of OFFER Trusteeship *'Being a Trustee of OFFER for 6 years enabled Low Edges Community and Safety Forum (who I represented) to have a stronger voice for smaller community organisations on a city wide level, which was a really valuable asset.'*

**Finally a few thank-you's...**

To OFFER trustees for their continued support, to our funders, and particularly to the VCF sector reps who help turn our mission statement of an influential VCF sector that makes a difference in Sheffield into reality.

**Sheffield BME Network's  
1st AGM 2009**



**Date: Thursday 26th March 2009**

**Time: 10:00am until 1:00pm**

Mercury St Pauls Hotel, 119 Norfolk Street,  
The Boar's Gardens



**Preventing Violent Extremism:  
Winning hearts and minds?**

Two linked events examining the Preventing Violent Extremism strategy and ways of working with partners to influence its delivery in Sheffield

Dates: Monday 16th February & Monday 16th March 2009  
Location: main event from 10am-2pm including lunch  
Registration: free, refreshments £4.75

**10th Cross Partnership Event  
Autumn 2008**  
**The Perfect Opportunity**



**to have our say in  
The Review of the Sheffield First  
Family of Partnerships**

13 October 2008. 12 - 4pm  
The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane,  
Sheffield, S1 4FW



**OFFER, 4th floor, The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane,  
Sheffield, S1 4FW**

**Tel: 0114 253 6730 Fax: 0114 253 6731**

**Email: info@offer.org.uk Website: www.offer.org.uk**



FUNDED

OFFER [Open Forum for Economic Regeneration] exists to support VCF organisations and networks to work in partnership and strategically influence the creation of successful, inclusive communities in Sheffield.  
OFFER is a Company Ltd by Guarantee registered in England no. 3740934, and a registered Charity No. 1100677 Registered office: 4th Floor, the Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield, S1 4RW

Do you want to be more involved in your community?  
...and become a better representative of your community?

"It has helped me put together the jigsaw, and now I want to know more!"

**our effectiveness**

SIN is the Sheffield Infrastructure Network. Membership is open to all voluntary, community and faith sector organisations that provide any aspect of infrastructure service in Sheffield to support other voluntary, community & faith sector groups in delivering frontline services to their client group or the

**offer Making Community Work**

