

Devon Consortium Diversity Reference Group - Committed to Diversity

The Consortium places a high importance on diversity issues, and takes seriously its responsibility for supporting the voluntary and community sector in Devon to refocus services and employment practices on the needs of diverse communities and groups of staff.

The Devon Consortium works closely with a Consortium Diversity Reference Group (the Reference Group) to ensure that all Devon Consortium plans, funding applications and individual projects are inclusive and promote equality for all.

The Reference Group acts as critical friend to the Devon Consortium, and identifies gaps in services or instances where services are not being taken up by some diverse groups.

The Reference Group includes representatives from:

- Fata He
- Devon Racial Equality Council
- Living Options Devon
- Voluntary Youth Services
- Age Concern
- Community Council of Devon
- Devon Faiths Forum

and aims to create a dynamic process for sharing best diversity practice.

The Reference Group is currently developing it's Action Plan for 2009.10 and this will be available on the Consortium website in the near future.

Collaboration, Partnership and Representation Programme Update

There have been a number of recent developments within the Consortium project dealing with collaboration, partnership and representation (CPR Project). Recommendations for the work were produced to take on board the discussions of the full Devon Consortium meeting which took place in December 2009.

VCS Representatives

The system of voluntary sector representation in Devon is being looked at with a

view to producing a clearer and more coherent way of ensuring that there is both accountable representation to a 'constituency' and a participative dimension. An induction course for VCS reps has been put together and will be piloted in March. It is anticipated that this will help in clarifying representatives' roles; provide networks of support and mentorship and inform the Consortium structures of voluntary and community sector need.

The list of representatives on countywide partnerships has been updated. There is still a need to find a balance within the system so that channels of communication are open and two-way. We are working on putting a reps' guidebook on the Consortium website.

Compact for Devon Update

The Compact for Devon won a national commendation for its Partnership Code of Practice. There were a number of events and displays across the county during Compact Week in November. Training materials from the national office were made available to Compact Hub champions. Approaches to VCS organisations that are not Compact signatories have resulted in a new wave of expressions of interest. The Compact monitoring system has been updated and now includes organisations' stories of Compact successes, problems and challenges.

This is available to any organisation considering becoming a signatory.

Communities of Interest (COIs)

Work on COIs has focused on researching both what we currently have and what models appear to work well elsewhere. There is a report on the current system available for circulation. There are some encouraging developments and a number of differing models. In the first instance opening the website for COIs to have two-way patterns of communication and influence is important. If you would be interested in furthering this please contact us.

If anybody would like further detail, please contact David Waddilove, telephone 01392 202057, or email: david.waddilove@exetercvs.org.uk

Dates for your diary:

The VCS Assembly: 'Beyond Boundaries - Working together for recognition, resources and an increasing role'. Wednesday 25th February 2009, 10am-3.30pm in Wonford Community Centre, Exeter. For further information contact info@devonconsortium.net

VCS Representatives Course: There will be a free 1 day course for VCS Representatives held on Monday 23rd March and again on Thursday 26th March, 9.30-4pm. This is a pilot course for anyone who is involved in representation or who wants to be: that includes representatives on the local strategic partnership, carers' and service users' representatives; neighbourhood or community group representatives. The course will be held at Exeter CVS, Wat Tyler House, King William Street, Exeter EX4 6PD For further info and to book a place please contact David Waddilove, CPR Programme Coordinator - david.waddilove@exetercvs.org.uk