

**COMMUNITY COHESION THEMATIC GROUP MEETING
2.00pm, 24th April 2009, West Lancashire Investment Centre**

Present:

Cllr Iain Ashcroft	Chair	Kim Webber	WLDC
Cllr R Pendleton	WLDC	Jeanette Hickey	Lancashire Police
John Miller	NHS Central Lancashire	Zainab Ali	NHS Central Lancashire
John Buck	Lancashire Fire & Rescue	Dawn Clarke	NHS Central Lancashire
Rachel Walker	Lancashire Fire & Rescue	Joanne Latham	LCC
Kath Gresty	Skelmersdale College	Robert Johnstone	Access Matters
Chris Hartley	Skelmersdale College	Brian Lussey	WLDC
Greg Mitten	West Lancs CVS		

In attendance: Liz Donnelly (LSP Secretariat)

1 Apologies

Pam Smith	LCC
Grant Murdoch	LCC- Young Peoples Service

2. Individual Introductions

Those at the meeting briefly introduced themselves.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 23rd January 2009 were **Agreed** as accurate.

4. Matters Arising

None

5. The Navajo Network- Presentation by John Miller (NHS Central Lancashire and Chair of Navajo Charter Mark Panel)

John Miller presented an overview of the Navajo network which is a group of organisations in Lancashire, mainly in the public, voluntary and community sectors, interested in improving service delivery and addressing issues of social well-being for the LGBT community in Lancashire. John did indicate that in respect of LGBT groups, West Lancashire was “bit of a desert”.

The work of Navajo includes the Charter Mark scheme; strategy development and mainstreaming LGBT issues; training including a five day course “Understanding Sexuality” available to all organisations; co-ordinating anti-homophobic work in educational settings; sharing good practice and providing advice on Equality Impact

Assessments.

The Navajo Charter Mark is both a signpost to say a particular organisation is LGBT friendly and also a service indicator that stamps a hallmark of quality on the services provided by an organisation to the LGBT community. The Charter Mark provides a strategic tool for outreach work in that its presence offers opportunities to develop with the local LGBT community and service providers to build capacity and bring isolated community members into the service loop.

All Charter Mark applications require an assessment of an organisation's ethics, practices and procedures and also a periodical review to ensure it still meets the criteria.

John informed the meeting that there were currently 100 holders of the Charter Mark encompassing whole and parts of organisations eg Lancashire Constabulary HQ, Fylde Borough Council, Preston CVS, Age Concern Preston and South Ribble.

Cllr Ashcroft thanked John for his very informative presentation and a question and answer session then followed.

Robert Johnstone asked about the 5 day training course and whether it addressed issues around disability. John indicated that it did saying that that is a need to get away from stereotypical representations of gays etc

Cllr Bob Pendleton asked about parents' reactions to their children coming out and how the wider community (such as schools) can be educated . John responded that there were still instances of parents throwing out young people from their homes . He also indicated that it was difficult to get schools to deal with these and other issues such as bullying due to the lack of expertise amongst teachers. But he did say that pilot studies in Lancashire schools were being carried out and LCC could provide information on these.

Jeanette Hickey mentioned that the Police will only give anti homophobic talks (as well anti racist etc) in schools if they are asked to.

Cllr Pendleton asked about what is being done to resolve the issue of West Lancashire being a "desert" in respect of LGBT work. John mentioned that a helpline had been set up but it had received no queries. He said there was a need to promote Navajo and encourage organisations to look at their practices etc

Cllr Ashcroft indicated the role of the LSP to encourage the development of awareness. He saw the need to address school governor training and suggested this as a way forward.

6. West Lancashire- Understanding the Statistics- Presentation by Liz Donnelly (WLDC)

Liz Donnelly presented some facts and figures saying an understanding of who lives in West Lancashire and of any divisions between and within groups can be a starting point for decisions about potential actions and who they should be targeted at.

She indicated that between 2006 and 2031 the number of persons aged 75+ in West Lancashire is projected to more than double; that in 2001, only 1.5% of residents were black or of an ethnic minority; that 84% of residents indicated they were Christian and

there was a lack of data regarding numbers of LGBT people. She also informed the meeting that 62% of West Lancashire population live in rural settlements or large market towns (a relatively high proportion compared with nationally- 27%). With regard to migrant workers coming to West Lancashire, Liz pointed out that between May 2004 and December 2008, 2,910 workers from those countries joining the EU had registered to work with local employers. The majority were young Polish workers in the agricultural sector,

The average gross household income in West Lancashire in 2008 (£33,800) was slightly lower than that nationally and varied from £43,000 in Parbold ward to £24,000 in Birch Green in Skelmersdale. In August 2008, 32% of the working age population in another Skelmersdale ward- Digmaor- were claiming one or more benefits (7% in Parbold). Liz then described recent Job Seekers Allowance Claimant data (proxy for unemployment data) which indicated that during February 2009, 4.0% of West Lancashire's working population were claiming JSA (but double this proportion in three Skelmersdale wards) . Over the year, the number of JSA claimants had increased by 64% (lower than for the County as a whole -78%) although the % increases in various wards outside Skelmersdale were much higher (eg +242% in Aughton Park).

Liz then presented some data around health and disabilities saying that in 2007, 5% of residents had a serious disability and that West Lancashire had a more than expected prevalence of people with mental illnesses. In terms of educational disparities, a much higher proportion of pupils living in Parbold, Wrightington and Dalton gained 5+ GCSEs at Grades A*-C in 2006/07 (84%) compared with those in Central Skelmersdale (41%).

Liz then brought together the previous data by providing some indication of local deprivation. Whereas barriers to housing and services (such as a post office, primary school) are issues in the more rural areas, there are concentrations of multiple, employment, income, health and educational deprivation in Skelmersdale. In fact there are three neighbourhoods in Birch Green, Digmaor and Moorside wards ranked in the top 3% nationally. According to the Vulnerable Localities Index, these three areas are considered to be at least twice as vulnerable to community cohesion issues as the Lancashire average. Liz pointed out the factors influencing the level of community cohesion in area- community and individual characteristics (eg deprivation, age, ethnicity) as well as individuals' attitudes and actions (respect for ethnic difference, volunteering).

She finished her presentation by notifying the meeting of the four indicators allocated to the thematic Group ie

- NI 1- % who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- NI 4 - % who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- NI 5- % satisfied with their area as a place to live
- NI 35- Building resilience to violent extremism

During the presentation , various points of clarification and discussion were raised.

Regarding mental illnesses, Zainab Ali asked if breakdowns by age and ethnicity were available. Liz expressed some doubt but would check on this.

Cllr Pendleton pointed out that in terms of deprivation, there was a link to education. Kath Gresty said there had been some recent improvements in Skelmersdale schools and that Skelmersdale College itself had a high NVQ success rate . Glenburn School

had the highest % in terms of “value added” but was still not hitting government targets.

Kim Webber pointed out that in respect of the four indicators, the Thematic Group “owns” these indicators although Brian Lussey said other thematic groups such as the CDRP can also deal with them. Jeanette Hickey also pointed out that the increasing numbers of overseas students to Edge Hill University could impact on some of these indicators.

7. Action Plan- Workshop led by Kim Webber (WLDC)

The meeting then considered the formulation of an action plan.

Kim Webber suggested that a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats exercise be initially carried out in an effort to identify future possibilities, the outcomes we are wanting and what will get us there (ie the drivers of change). This SWOT exercise would provide a good focus for potential actions.

The results of the SWOT exercise are attached separately.

It was **Agreed** that the workshop exercise to formulate an action plan be continued at a special meeting of the Thematic Group in June 2009.

8. Exchange of Information

It was **Agreed** that any information items that members of the Thematic Group wanted to report be sent to Liz Donnelly for her to pass on to the LSP bulletin.

9. Date of Next Meeting and Proposed Agenda Item

It was **Agreed** that the only agenda item for the special meeting in June 2009 was to be the action plan for the Thematic Group.

The Thematic Group indicated it was happy to continue with future meetings on Friday afternoons.