

WEST LONDON NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT



**West London Network
9 Hounslow Business Park
Alice Way
Hounslow TW3 3UD**

Tel: 020 8572 5950

Fax: 020 8572 9027

Email: hvsfchani@yahoo.co.uk

**Rachel Fryatt : Development Manager
Chani Bhasin : Support Officer**

Funded by



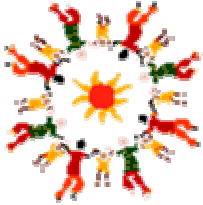
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West London Network Conference

Waterman's Arts Centre, Brentford, 18th November 2003

- 09.45** **Arrival & Coffee**
- 10.00** **Chair's Opening Remarks**
Rory Gillert, Director, Hounslow Voluntary Sector Forum
- 10.15** **West London Network Presentation**
Rachel Fryatt, Development Manager, West London Network
- 10.30** **Panel presentation and discussion:
Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector**
- Connexions
Graham Jimpson, Development Manager
- Learning & Skills Council
Rebecca Towers, Implementation Manager
- Strategic Health Authority
Maria Kane, Director of Communications
- West London Alliance
Harriet Cain, WLA Economic Development
- How do you work with the Voluntary & Community Sector
 - Give some examples
 - Success stories
 - Problems
- 10.50** **Questions to the panel**
- 11.15** **Break and move to workshops**
- 11.30** **Workshops:**
- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Training | Information Technology |
| Health | Community Cohesion |
| Young People | Diversity |
| Housing & Homelessness | Environment |
- 12.45** **Lunch** – notice board suggestions to WLN
- 13.45** **Workshops** - as above
- 15.00** **Close**



Workshop details for 11.30am and 13.45pm

The facilitators have been selected to provide an overview on each issue and bring a wide range of relevant experience to contribute to the discussions. The workshops will run twice to give you the opportunity to explore two different issues from the list below and you can find out which workshops you signed up for on the attendance list in this pack. A note-taker will be present in each workshop and a report will be compiled and circulated after the event. Enjoy the day!

Thank you for remembering the following basic ground rules when participating:

- Mutual respect
- Listening to others
- Valuing every contribution
- Not to interrupt
- Working within an equal opportunities framework

1. Training

Facilitator: Atifa Ali Khan

(Training and Quality Co-ordinator, Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Service)

2. Health

Facilitator: Anju Bhatt

(Director, Brent Association for Voluntary Action)

3. Young People

Facilitator: Carol Coventry

(Director, Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services)

4. Housing and Homelessness

Facilitator: Paul Adamson

(Director, SPEAR)

5. Information Technology

Facilitator: Jason King

(Information Development Officer, Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services)

6. Community Cohesion

Facilitator: Diane O'Connor

(Research Consultant, Pathfinder Theme Group 3)

Facilitator: Diane Corriette

(Research Consultant, Pathfinder Theme Group 1)

7. Diversity

Facilitator: Gwyneth Dawes

(Head, Community Affairs Team, Commission for Racial Equality)

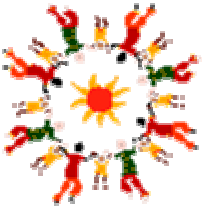
8. Environment

Facilitator: Simon Bromhead

(Funding and Development Officer, Groundwork West London)

Facilitator: Ravinder Mangat

(Senior Community and Youth Officer, Groundwork Thames Valley)



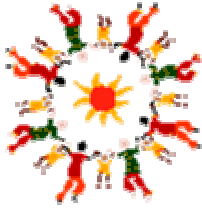
**Chair's opening remarks
Rory Gillert, Director, Hounslow Voluntary Sector Forum**

'SUSTAINING SUCCESS'

- **6,000 VCO's in West London**
- **Total income - £727 million**
- **20,000 paid staff / 2.6% of WL workforce**
- **6 out of 10 WL VCO's are employers**
- **140,000 volunteers**
- **£380 million GDP contribution to WL wealth**
- **6.6 million beneficiaries**

All were welcomed to the conference. The above statistics are extracted from a report by Carl Wilding of NCVO examining the economic impact of the voluntary & community sector across West London. They clearly demonstrate the value of the work done by all the organisations in the area.

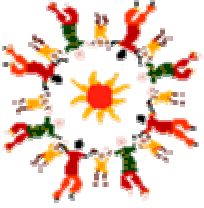
West London Network Presentation
Rachel Fryatt, Development Manager, West London Network



West London Network
9 Hounslow Business Park
Alice Way Hounslow
TW3 3UD
Tel: 020 8572 5950
Fax: 020 8572 9027
Email: hvsfchani@yahoo.co.uk

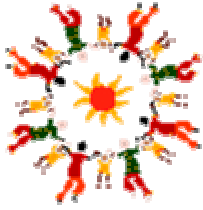
West London Network

- strategic reasons for formation of network
- brief history of network Project to date
 - future plans & activities



THE NATIONAL PICTURE

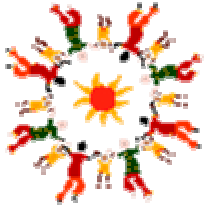
- **Labour party commitment to develop regional government in 1997 manifesto**
- **1998 Regional Development Agencies Act**
- **1999 RDA's set up: - aim is to co-ordinate regional and economic development and regeneration.**
- **In addition there is a Regional Chamber or Assembly made up from various representatives with whom the RDA has to consult.**



THE LONDON REGION

- **The Greater London Authority (GLA)**
 - **directly elected Mayor**
 - **separately elected Assembly (established by the Greater London Authority Act 1999)**
- **The GLA oversees 4 functional bodies:**
 1. **The London Development Agency**
 2. **The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority**
 3. **The Metropolitan Police Authority**
 4. **Transport for London**
- **The London Development Agency**
 - 4 guiding principles for the Economic Development Strategy for London**
 1. **Economic Growth**
 2. **Knowledge and Learning**
 3. **Diversity, Inclusion and Renewal**
 4. **Sustainable Development**

THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IS WELL PLACED TO CONTRIBUTE TO ALL 4 PRINCIPLES IN THE STRATEGY.



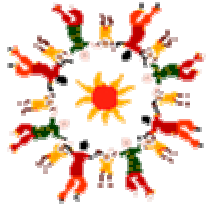
LONDON'S SUB REGIONS

London West

Areas covered:

- Brent**
- Ealing**
- Hammersmith & Fulham**
- Harrow**
- Hillingdon**
- Hounslow**

Each area has an elected Borough Council and a sense of its own identity.



EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES OFFERING THE POSSIBILITY FOR DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

- **Initiatives co-terminous with the sub-region**

West London Learning and Skills Council

West London Learning Partnership

West London Connexions

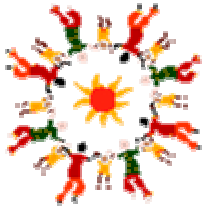
- **Initiatives not co-terminous with the sub-region**

Strategic Health Authority

- **includes Kensington & Chelsea**

Local Strategic Partnerships:

- **Ealing, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham
all have a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
allocation**
- **Community Empowerment Fund**
- **Community Chest**



DEVELOPING THE NETWORK

1999: 6 CVS Directors started meeting

2000: Sustaining Success published

Key Findings:

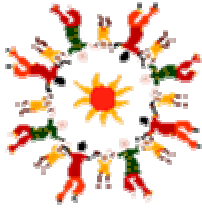
: Almost 6,000 organisations based in West London

: Total income of £727 million

: 6 out of 10 organisations are employers

: For every £1 of government grant income the sector spends £6.60

The Directors Group has acted as the Interim Steering Group for WLN Project.



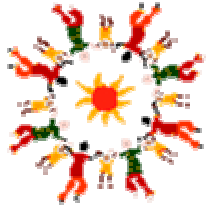
2002

Feb: Development Manager Employed

May - June: 6 events to raise profile of sub-regional issues & canvass opinion for conference

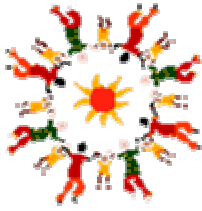
Oct: Conference for 200 organisations at Watermans Arts Centre gives mandate to take Network forward.

Dec: Steering Group discussion meeting



2003

- Jan: Awarded Community Cohesion Pathfinder status**
- Apr: New 3 year funding from ALG commenced**
- May: Appointed Network Support Officer**
- June: Appointed Community Cohesion Co-ordinator**
- July: Steering Group meets.**
- August: First meeting of the Training Forum**
- September: What Works Seminar held in Brent**
- October: Good Practice report published**
- November: 2nd West London Network Conference**



Steering Group:

Meeting of network members to design structure of Steering Group (December 2002)

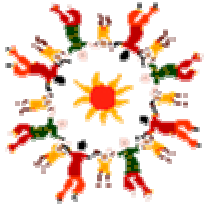
Members invited who expressed interest at last year's WLN Conference

Decision:

6 CVS Directors

6 elected/selected representatives

6 co-opted members with West London wide experience to be invited to join Steering Group to ensure full mix of voluntary sector participation



Membership:

BRENT:

**Spike Hudson, Brent Community Network
Anju Bhatt, Director BRAVA**

EALING:

**Janpal Basran, Southall Community Alliance
Andy Roper, Chief Executive ECVS**

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM:

**Tessa Buchanan Patel, Urban Partnership Group
Penelope Harrison, Director VSRA**

HARROW:

**Linda Robinson, Harrow Gingerbread
Julia Mayo, Director HAVS**

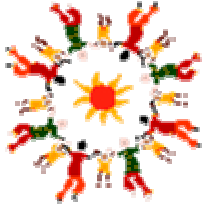
HILLINGDON:

**John Thirkettle, Hillingdon Federation of Community
Associations
Carol Coventry, Director HAVS**

HOUNSLOW:

**Jim Davidson, HACAN Clear Skies
Rory Gillert, Director HVSF**

We are currently looking at inviting a further 6 to join us



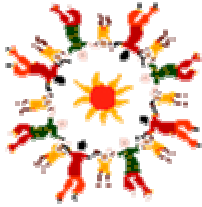
1. Community Cohesion Pathfinder

‘A cohesive community is a holistic structure in which members, irrespective of difference (faith, culture, race, gender, age and disability) are valued citizens with similar opportunities.’

West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder – Summary Report, Good Practice in Community Cohesion

Partners

- **West London Alliance**
- **West London Network**
- **Metropolitan Police**
- **West London Business**
- **London Fire Brigade**
- **Primary Care Trusts**
- **Trinity Mirror Group**



Sub – regional partnership –

London Borough of Ealing accountable body

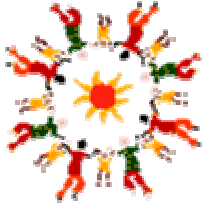
West London Network lead voluntary organisation

Stakeholder Group

Theme Group 1: Communication & Dissemination

Theme Group 2: Public Sector meeting the challenge of Community Cohesion

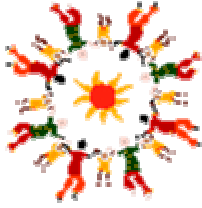
Theme Group 3: Community Development & strengthening community & voluntary activities



2. West London Training Forum

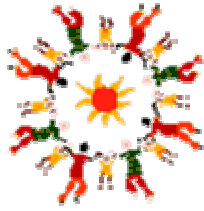
Lead organisation: Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services

Aim: To raise quality & effectiveness of training courses being offered to the sector & to increase collaborative working between all 6 CVS.



Time – table

- June:** Project marketing sessions in each of 6 boroughs
- Evaluation of progress / outcome of sessions
- Invites to First Forum meeting
- July:** Collation of ideas & evaluations
- Aug:** 1st Forum meeting
- Oct:** 2nd Forum meeting
- Nov:** Information collation for Website
- Dec:** 3rd Forum meeting – presentation of Website for comments
- Feb:** 4th Forum meeting & Website Launch
- Handover to WLN for continuation of work



3. Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities

Purpose of Funding:

to support local voluntary & community sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

London West LSC has allocated the budget as follows:

Per borough

Revenue - £34,603.83

Capital - £14,097.83

Partnerships in the borough including voluntary sector organisations have submitted proposals to fit criteria & address the needs in each borough,

West London Network was part of the team which looked at the proposals.

Timetable for project delivery

	April - September	October - March
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ Staff • Network event • 3 x steering group meetings • Agree constitution, terms of reference and structures. • Website design • Attend meetings with sub-regional agencies • 1 x Policy Briefing • Facilitate one Compact process • Audit of community engagement and participation in LSP's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference • Network event • 3 x steering group meetings • Website Launch • Agree representation from Network • 1 x Policy Briefing • Agree Compact • Cross-borough workshop • Compile information and produce report • Directory research
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network event • 3 x steering group meetings • Operate in accordance with constitution etc • Update Website • Directory production • Support representatives and circulate feedback from meetings via CVS newsletters • 1 x Policy Briefing • Compact research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network event • 3 x steering group meetings • Conference • Liaise with sub-regional agencies re: future funding for the Network • Identify further need for representatives • Feedback via CVS newsletters • Implement charges for services • 1 x Policy Briefing • Compact agreement
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network event • 3 x steering group meetings • Review constitution • Review and update Website • Ongoing support for representatives • 1 x Policy Briefing • Compact research • Implement charges for services • Apply for funding as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Event • 3 x Steering group meetings • Implement constitution changes • Conference • Update Directory • 1 x Policy Briefing • Compact agreement • Activities as appropriate

**CONNEXIONS
LONDON WEST**

**WEST LONDON
VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR
CONFERENCE**

18TH November 2003

Address by Graham Jimpson, Development Manager

CONNEXIONS LONDON WEST

THE STORY SO FAR

Connexions Vision;

- **A personal Adviser to Every Young Person Who Needs It**
- **Aspirations, Participation and Achievement**
- **Listening to Young People**
- **Celebrating Diversity**
- **Universal and Targeted Service**
- **Both ETE Advisers and Someone Who Can Resolve Barriers to Learning**

CXLW:

- **A Contracting Organisation (8 Central Staff, 6 Local Managers)**
- **226 PAs for London (108 Careers, 84 LA, 12 Vol Sec)**
- **Enhanced Careers Services**
- **1 for 4 Deal with Local Authorities**
- **Bidding Round with Voluntary Sector**
- **Discretionary Funds with LMCs**
- **New Funding for 2003/4**
 - **7.5 Pas (NEET/most deprived estates)**
 - **27 Pas (PAYP)**
 - **£170K voluntary sector grants**
 - **£98k to each LMC**
 - **additional central staff**

CONNEXIONS LONDON WEST

A VISION FOR 2004

“Within the context of a universal service, Connexions was set up to reduce the number of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) and this is the key where we need to achieve measurable outcomes.”

Central Target:

To reduce NEETs by 10% by 2004, i.e., to reduce by 400 in West London and 106 in Hillingdon (whilst identifying a similar number of young people whose status is not known).

Supplementary Targets:

Achievement and days missed at school, BME's, teenage pregnancy, care leavers, LDD, young offenders, drug users, asylum seekers

“ We will support a wide a set of policies and programmes designed to transform secondary education and increase education, participation retention and achievement in learning.”
(including 14-19 Next Steps, EMAs, E2E,)

CONNEXIONS LONDON WEST

The Unique Contribution of the Voluntary Sector

- **'Can do' mentality**
- **Reaches the parts other sectors cannot reach**
- **Locally based and local knowledge**
- **No stigma**
- **Can offer specialist services e.g. to young refugees, BME, disability, homelessness**
- **Flexible**
- **Good value for money**

Possible Weakness

- **Lack of comprehensive coverage**
- **Modest administrative support**
- **Interface with the statutory sector**
- **Short term funding damages long term viability**

Learning & Skills Council
Rebecca Towers, Implementation Manager

Learning & Skills Council

Our mission is to raise participation and attainment through high quality education and training which puts learners first

Our vision is that, by 2010, young people and adults in England will have the knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world

Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector

- ESF (Project funding and capacity building)
- Raising the quality of ESF provision
- Neighbourhood Learning I Deprived Communities Fund (NLDCF)
- Workforce Development
- Mainstream activities

Strategic Health Authority

Maria Kane, Director of Communications and Patient and Public Involvement

North West London Strategic Health Authority is one of 28 SHA set up nationally as the local headquarters of the NHS. Its primary function is to performance manage NHS organisations locally and work as a partner to improvement of healthcare services in the sector. (see diagram for NWL NHS organisations). It is also responsible for promoting better health, planning to enhance capacity, planning future configuration of health services, and working with its sister organisation - Workforce Development Confederation - to develop recruit and retain staff for the NHS (which employs over 1 million people nationally)

The NHS recognises the value of the voluntary and community sector and is working towards having a local Compact or strategic partnership between voluntary and statutory agencies in place in every Primary Care Trust area (each borough in North West London) by end March 2004. The role of the SHA will be to ensure that

Section 11 - Duty to involve and consult with the public in planning of services and changes to services. THE NHS hopes to be able to work with voluntary agencies in reaching groups of patients, carers and the public who do not traditionally get involved.

Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health - an independent body, which has awarded contracts to the voluntary sector to be Local

Network Providers, supporting Patient Forums which will be set up for every Primary Care Trust and acute trust in the country

Local examples of voluntary and NHS partnerships:

HOPE in Hillingdon (Health Opportunities Promotion and Education): target groups are refugee and asylum seekers, travellers, and single homeless people. Hilkingdon PCT is lead partner

EACH Ethnic Alcohol Counselling in Hounslow (Harrow and Brent): based in and funded by PCT. Offers culturally appropriate counselling service as satellite service based in GP surgeries, walk-in clinics etc

West London Alliance
Harriet Cain, WLA Economic Development

Harriet thanked everyone and was going to speak about Voluntary & Community Sector and what structures are in place.

Theme - emerging sub-regional agenda.

I represent WLA – sub-regional grouping Brent, Harrow, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hill & Hounslow

- Together able to address strategic issues, cross boundary. e.g. transport.
- Stronger position to lobby – resident, service providers, funding & encourage other sectors
- i.e. WLB bought collaboration between WLA & business. WLB incorporates chamber of commerce, Inward investment, unified voice for large & small.
- Given strength of WL economy – robust partner for WLA
- To facilitate dialogue between LA's & business – W.L.P. – umbrella organisation
- Negotiations underway for WLN. Indeed WLA instrumental in funding which contributed to developing WLN. I understand on back of report - energetic Voluntary & Community sector making positive contribution especially local employment (Sustaining Success 2001)
- Many aware WLA success funds for C.C. pathfinder. Sub-regional initiative. WLN major partner.
- Why community cohesion in W.L. never considered itself experiencing problems like others.

Profile

- We have younger population than national average. Very diverse. More so than London generally & even inner London 7% of community born outside EU at last census.
- This diversity brings strengths to work force & boosts economy.

- A young, cosmopolitan population likely to be more high achieving & skilled.
- Economic indicators show West London to have a competitive advantage.
- Down side. Population highly mobile – high turnover - can result in community stress & lack of cohesion. Rapid change always brings challenges
- Has to be managed, lessons learned positive approaches shared.

Also although WL economically buoyant prosperity not equally shared. Pockets of deprivation in East & around Heathrow. Another sub-regional initiative is developing an EDS for West London

Recognition that population growth, increased economic activity & changes in life style choices – need to be balanced with social inclusion, community cohesion and environmental quality.

Important to involve all sectors. Partnership look forward to consolidating dialogue with Voluntary & Community Sector through the Network.

Today is for exchanging information across partners. I hope everyone contributes to exploring how best the sector might situate itself within the emerging sub-regional agenda.

Training Workshop

Facilitator: Atifa Ali Khan

Participants:

Hillingdon Law Centre
Relate – Richmond
Age Concern – Hounslow
Acton Alliance
Cancer Black Care
Yeldhall Homeless Projects
Brent Community Housing
Community Safety Advisory Service
Acton Credit Union
Housing Association
YWCA

What to achieve from the session?

1. More information on training
2. What is available and what is in place in voluntary organisations
3. What's available for staff, volunteers & beneficiaries
4. What is available across West London, especially for IT and quality assurance
5. What training is available for volunteers and accessibility
6. Fact finding – what's available for staff & clients
7. Networking – how can we work together
8. A need to set up NVQ assessment centre, more information is needed & what training is available
9. Accreditation

Introduction

Atifa explained that the Training Forum was set up in order to share information across organisations in West London.

Brainstorm on strategies & policies

- funding for hard to reach groups (funders need to change frameworks , i.e soft outcomes)
- LSC – to get contracts have to deliver through modern apprenticeship framework – hard with hard to reach groups)
- Frameworks need to change for voluntary sector contracts to be more sustainable
- Something needed between basic skills & modern apprenticeship, i.e. stand alone NVQ2 – LSC won't fund
- LSC wants voluntary sector to squeeze client group into their framework
- Basic skills strategies
- Modern apprenticeships
- No current capacity building strategies (but links to others)
- Is it strategies for public or voluntary sector

- Voluntary organisations need support to understand these strategies & policies - but don't have capacity. Voluntary organisations are busy delivering. How is West London Network going to support voluntary organisations?
- The network has to find out what the need is in the voluntary sector and then deal with it.
- How will the network support organisations, use CVS
- Voluntary organisations – what do the new strategies mean to them? i.e.
 1. translation of the new strategies
 2. basic skills training - train volunteers to understand client group or to provide IAG service to ethnic groups
 3. train people to work together
 4. train trustees in their responsibilities
 5. discrete packages to support voluntary sector training providers
- training forum – to share expertise across West London
- the group wants to raise issues / problems and WLN to solve them
- Voluntary sector training – provide same training as is provided for the statutory sector

Conclusion

- Opportunity for people to work on these issues – embryonic
- Starting to address last years issues
- Training Forum will be perceived as an organisation the LSC can talk to and also working with connexions etc.
- need to set up information meetings & demonstrate we know what we are talking about.
- Identify generic needs – offer recognised training i.e. working as volunteers, expectations of staff
- Also mapping exercise on training in West London.
- Don't know what training is out there
- People want information on training forum & also want to put forward opinions & problems
- Everyone at workshop should connect with forum, forum needs to be open to suggestions & problems and people can offer solutions on what they are doing.
- STAN – pan – London - LVSC – 2nd Tier Advisors Network to support workers as professionals, engage with them is possible.

All these are confusing, not easy to understand. Which are relevant?

What ways to inform front-line staff of implications of strategic / foreign / consultation opportunities. This will affect way courses are funded and delivered, would like to see feedback / success stories.

PQASSO / Investors in People are tools not strategies.

Success story – LSC funded 10 NVQ qualifications for managers, this was motivating for other people.

Health Workshop

Facilitator: Anju Bhatt

Health

- Key Government Strategies
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Compact
- Future Builders / sustainable funding
- ACU – Infrastructure Review
- Joint Commissioning
- Cross Cutting review on inequalities – PPI consultation - choice
- PPI Forums / ICAS / Abolishing CHC's
- Strategic Partnership for patients & Carers
- Keeping the NHS local
- Shifting the balance of power

Opportunities

- To work in partnership
- Networking with other voluntary sector organisations & joint funding bids
- Key role for voluntary sector in tackling inequalities in health
- Statutory organisations now listening to voluntary sector / a stronger voice
- Voluntary sector to be providers of training as well as recipients – move to a social model
- Better relationships – more defined roles (works on individual relationships – should it be more strategic)
- LSPs need to be more effective / run by LA at present. Should be serviced by them but run by each sectors
- Professionalism can be demonstrated by voluntary sector – they can define their role & use
Needs to be written into plan / mainstreamed. Demonstrate our “worth”.

Threats

- Voluntary sector becomes a pumping ground
- Get given tasks we are not equipped for
- Funding cuts – sustainability (should be across board for all accountability)
- Trust
- Becomes so strategic
- Limited resources / losing independence for both strategic / voluntary sector.

Response across West London

- Training
- Health sub-group on NWLN
- Share information & network, will cut duplication
- Finance assistance - sustained funding

Key Government Strategies

- Abolition of Community Health Councils
- PPI Forums
- *Compact/Local Strategic Partnerships
- Cross cutting Review-Future Builders/Capacity Infrastructure and of health inequalities
- Foundation Hospitals
- National Service Framework
- *Strategic Partnership with Patients, Carers and Users
- *Shifting the Balance of Power
- Workforce Development in NHS
- Protection of Vulnerable Adults/Every Child Matters

- Considered most important

Opportunities for the Voluntary Sector

- VCS to be heard and have say in decision-making
- Compact a vehicle for ensuring partnership working
- Acknowledgement of user power and control over their own lives
- Recognition of the work that the voluntary sector does in improving the quality of life
- Increased range of services and depth of services provided by voluntary sector

Threats/Weaknesses

- Rhetoric v Reality
- Erosion of independence of voluntary sector
- Sector not homogenous, small organisations have representational needs
- Services on the cheap
- Increased responsibility for management committee members

How West London Network can address this

- Work at a strategic level with Health Authority to access training and provide information
- Sub group to share good practise and information
- West London Network to keep watching brief and inform appropriately
- Look at accessible information and develop information jointly and in community languages
- Forum for Health Advocacy for West London

Housing & Homelessness

Facilitator: Paul Adamson

Issues

- Government targets on B & B
- Housing benefit system
 - Issues for clients / worry
 - Issues for organisations keeping up timely, co-ordinated / monitored systems
- Anti Social Behaviour & cuts in benefits
- Housing shortage
- Inappropriate advice
- Lack of lifeskills for homeless who are rehoused / funding to develop services
- Consistency of homeless services
- Transition – poverty trap
 - resettlement support
- Temporary not permanent accommodation (rights or lack of in temporary accommodation)
- Situation of single homeless last on the ladder
- Direct benefits can lead to homelessness
- Access to supporting people funding particularly for small organisations
- Location
- Lack of co-ordination & strategy
 - London / Region / sub-region – Homelessness Forums & Sub- region links

Threats / Opportunities

- Bring together the homelessness issues across West London
- Training for
 - providers for routes to London
 - users for self help
- Expertise in development funding support & knowledge
- Access to Community Mental Health teams by homeless
- Develop more generalist housing advice agencies

Strategy / Policy

- Family Income Support
- Access to benefits
- Advice & Information
- Benefit Traps
- Feeling that 'advice' not being funded properly (Elderly, Homeless, Asylum Seekers)
- A lot of change / funding sources unclear / need more than 1 year funding
- Voluntary Sector needs core funding (Compact / Treasury)

- Volunteer support – admin difficulty (police checks)
- Need more co-operation and information
- Duplication – voluntary sector
 - Local Authority Voluntary Sector Unit
- Capacity Build voluntary organisations so they can attend fora
- Cross borough directories of voluntary sector providers / planning cycles / for a
- RSL's to work more effectively with the voluntary sector
- Large scale stock transfers impacting on vulnerable
- Supporting people – positive funding experience - through capped.
- Ability to engage in local strategies
- Pressures on monitoring no common process, if multi-funded
- Possible greater roll for homeless forums
- Preventative services
- Mediation

IT Workshop
Facilitator: Jason King

Participants:

Acton Alliance

HAFOD

Brent Community Housing

HVSF

Q: What IT support can you access?

A: UK Online, PC Homeloan Scheme, bid for Learning Direct Centre.

A: None

A: Small grant for IT for Residents Associations.

A: None

Q: If the Resident's Associations scheme worked, could it be replicated elsewhere? Is training available?

A: Don't know what free/cheap training is available.

A: Don't have money for training.

A: The money will nearly all be spent on the equipment.

A: Money wasted on website when staff cannot maintain it.

Ongoing commitment to site is essential.

A: Some site designs not user friendly

A: Problems of time-sensitive information & uploading a database.

Q: How to establish links between voluntary organisations working in similar areas?

A: People who most need it (e.g. homeless) cannot access information.

Q: What about the use of message boards attached to sites to allow exchange of information?

Q: Are clients using message boards vulnerable? What is responsibility of site organiser?

A: Quick response is the most important.

Q: Could there be London-wide networking on the web?

A: Email groups work really well. (E.g. 'Save Our Streets' tram campaign).

Q: Preferred to websites?

A: Yes, prefer email.

A: Yes, but some anxieties about Spam.

A: Belong to a number of International email groups. Easier than visiting websites

Q: Regionally how well is the sector supported? Can collaboration improve this?

Q: What about basic troubleshooting and hardware problems?

Q: Pathfinder is trying to set up 'circuit riders' – peripatetic IT support who'd also help to set up user-friendly systems.

Exchange of useful sites included:

IT4Communities, LASA, www.brent.gov.uk/brain, AOG.

WLN website will be up and running next year.

Community Cohesion

Facilitator: Diane O'Connor & Diane Corriette

The facilitators outlined research that had shown the problems faced in the voluntary community sector with respect to community cohesion. Research has uncovered examples of good practice and a report and an Executive Summary has been produced.

Many in the workshop wanted to know what community cohesion is. It is about networking and working in partnership with all groups, especially the disadvantaged. Therefore there needs to be an emphasis on outreach and working in cohesion. It is beyond the concept of race, equality and social inclusion and means we need to work together to try to create cohesion regardless of background. Community cohesion therefore means bringing back all groups.

The Community Cohesion Pathfinder was set up by the Government to find a way forward as a result of the riots in summer 2001. To start with policy had been encouraging the development of parallel communities, but there had been a little work across communities which led to resentment. It was seen as a step on from race and discrimination legislation.

The Community Advisory Forum held a meeting on the 11th of December and there is a need for more statutory involvement. There are three theme groups:

1. Community and dissemination
2. Community development and strengthening
3. Media portrayal of BME groups.

The Statutory sector wants to learn from the voluntary and community sector and there will be a series of events to help implement this. There will also be a report to the six boroughs and thus there will be cross sector learning.

One of the participants questioned the connection between community cohesion and the quality mark. Community cohesion is not getting a badge, but is about getting people to work together more effectively to reduce exclusion. Practical ways may include befriending and integrating services.

Statutory agencies need to put in place policies about how they will address community cohesion, e.g. the Fire Brigade Prevention, its Strategy will consider how to address the problem of potential arsonists.

It is noted that white elderly people can feel disenfranchised and community cohesion needs to be built into our daily lives, so that we are working across communities and not in a parallel way.

Local Authorities may be most difficult to involve and there is a need to educate them to fuel the resources of the voluntary sector. It was felt that Central Government is not such a problem but at Borough level political agenda could be in the way. Paul Boetang had reported that local authorities that were not helping voluntary organisations should be reported to him.

It was felt that the Learning and Skills Council needs to acknowledge soft outcome when grant applications are refused. It was also acknowledged that funding for community cohesion projects are not widely available and that a dedicated officer is needed to advise on all funding.

Reasons why the workshop was attended

- to get a broader idea of Community Cohesion
- encourages diversity & cohesion in recruitment & volunteers
- working with homeless – campaigning for them - to get more experience of Community Cohesion
- developing a Community Cohesion strategy within organisations & local authority
- intrigued – get West London definition
- find out more about it
- serves diverse community
- works across many different areas – wants better understanding of Community Cohesion
- understand more about Community Cohesion & how it relates to this client group
- find out definition of Community Cohesion

What do people think Community Cohesion is?

- look at where it has come from ie. Oldham 2001 - responses to an event
- how marginalised communities get on with each other in a community – not addressing individual needs
- Utopian dream of community at large- also contains different groups which retain their identities
- West London is looking at range of communities, bring together with a joint vision
- Media – get stories from community groups & refugee groups which were integrated & do good services
- Training between voluntary & statutory sectors.

Green leaflet – pathfinder produced, not everyone had seen it.

What level is it working at? 50 caseloads in report in different sectors – then concluded what is good practice.

- need more than distributing a report
- also sharing good practice
- 3 theme groups in pathfinder
 - media
 - community development

- public sector meeting challenge
- sharing of information between sectors, theme group meetings, seminars etc.
- funding for Community Cohesion work is difficult as sustaining money for CC projects is a problem.
- Geographical location an issue for funding – more difficult areas still have issues
- Mental health – not a fashionable thing to fund at present.
- Some projects easier to fund, ie. Community diet / eating project – could be an example of CC. Other projects are mad fit for funding.
- Where do you get funders for CC?
- ACU website – may have information on funders – Home Office
 - Community Cohesion

Unit

- does media shape public opinion, or does it reflect public opinion? Ie.

Mental

health stories about stabbings etc.

- local media in West London making a real effort to promote CC.
- problems finding placements for some client groups – need to influence business to promote cohesion.
- Local authorities don't find the voluntary sector services that they want / require
- influence councillors & get their support, therefore raises the organisations profile within the community.
- Work in partnership – new types of partners – don't be restricted by traditional partnerships
- Need to be written into the plan / priorities of statutory funders, otherwise they won't fund you – even for CC, ie. doing some of their work for them
- Re-package your service to fit the funding – voluntary organisations having to do this & be innovative to continue good work. Constant need to re-invent projects.
- how is CC different to Equal Opportunities? the next level about whole community & how it interacts, not individuals, this is not a new idea, just a new way of looking at it.
- Question about what DC does to influence / work with media being looked at on national level. Locally media will be part of West London Forum.
- There is a worry if voluntary sector has to work together for funding. How to divide the outputs, Competition for funding. Although at the CC seminar in September 2003, groups wanted to put in joint funding applications.
- Pathfinder looking at what is & what isn't working
- good CC may be achieved by individual projects
- look at what really effects people ie. housing, not words
- groups need to work together, not fight over resources.
- Housing - question of putting / housing people in their communities or not?
- Educate, not just in schools, adults also (ie religious festivals) and adapt.
- Housing very important. Community Cohesion will only work if correct resources.

Diversity Workshop

Facilitator: Gwyneth Dawes

What is diversity?

- differences recognising and accepting them
- respecting differences & working to a common goal
- Celebrating & accepting difference
- Shared humanity
- Valuing differences

Equality the foundation -legislation Sex & Equal Pay, Race Relations Amends, DDA - highlight groups – other groups left out - ageism, sexual orientation , religion, led to plea to value diversity – everybody valuable, capable of real contribution - Class & Poverty a big issue.

Key Strategies

- Legislation – Race Relation Amend Act – (Voluntary Sector refused money if no race policy)
- Voluntary sector is a very diverse section – local & national organisations need to reflect this & fund equally
- Bigger voluntary organisations need to reflect the wider community in their workforce
- Grouping all equalities / diversities together could be a problem
- Better funding - training on diversity
- Sharing best practice rather than regularity
- No standardised data set for ethnicity which means evidence on who uses services is just not there
- NSF's Cross Cutting review of Health – inequalities
- Access under the DDA effects voluntary organisations
- Small organisations need more support & assistance to write employment & understand Equal Opportunities policies
- Ageism & Racism in hospitals very discriminated
- Ethnic category - needs description - need government legislation – it is a double edge sword

Most Important:

- Legislation
- Funding / Education / Housing
- Communication (re-examine government policies)

Opportunities

- Policies
- Funding – to help diversity
- Ability to access information
- Lobbying
- Monitoring

Threats

- Lack of understanding
- Unwillingness to accept diversity
- Lack of key staff – too expensive to live in West London
- Denial of equality in employment
- Complicated complaints procedures

West London Response

Diverse, Heathrow etc makes it easier. Hillingdon has a cultural strategy – help foreign language – also in mother tongue. Revert to services in translation. Shared solutions – many solutions. Funding strategies could be addressed – trading aims etc. Cross borough funding applications – West London to help out.

Q: What is Diversity?

A: Differences coming together. Sharing our differences.

A: Incorporating all the different members of society.

A: A positive word indicating richness, a mix, learning through differences.

A: Being empowered to be what you are.

Q: Diversity Legislation?

Underpinned by Equality legislation but goes further to recognise everybody's potential to make a valuable contribution.

A cohesive society requires diversity.

Q: What about asylum seekers who have no UK citizenship?

A: They have UN rights but still may find themselves subject to prejudice.

Q: With regard to Diversity what are the relative roles of voluntary and statutory bodies?

A: Statutory sector can promote diversity in their choice of which organisations receive funding.

Q: There are currently three equality commissions; will these be superseded by a new umbrella organisation?

A: The three commissions are to become one, embracing diversity and including those groups not yet covered by legislation.

Q: Which of your organisations have a Diversity Policy?

A: We have an Equal Opportunities policy but have not yet tackled Diversity.

Q: Which are the key agencies and government strategies affecting your service delivery?

A: Local authority, PCT, Renewal

A: Enforcement agencies

A: Community Unit, Home Office

A: Government funding policies

A: Race Relations Amendment Act

A: Impact of funding cuts.

Q: Which promote implementation of Diversity policy?

A: Funding

A: Impact Assessment

A: Flexible employment conditions

A: Monitoring

A: Partnership working

Q: Which constitute a threat to implementation?

A: Funding

A: Perception of voluntary organisations as a kind of sub-sector of statutory bodies.

Q: How will W. London face up to the challenge?

A: More honesty

A: Less in fighting

A: Less 'politics'

A: Simpler, clearer legislation

Environment Workshop

Facilitator: Simon Bromhead and Ravinder Mangat

Neighbourhood Renewal fund – Local Strategic Partnerships

- Community Empowerment Fund (for setting up networks)

Regeneration

- addressing issues with pockets of deprivation
- SRB no more – LDA single pot

GLA

- Open spaces – anti-social behaviour
 - accessibility
 - quality
- Biodiversity strategy – London Biodiversity Partnership
 - Targets & Policies

Environment

- Transport – Aeroplanes – Heathrow – Threat!
- Car Share / Car pools
- Trams
- Bus Lanes etc
- Congestion Charging
- Pollution
- Waste – WRAP
- Local Authority Recycling Facilities (Doorstep recycling) - Promotion

Threats

- Heathrow
- Opening new transport options – get the current network right!

OPPs

- Public Transport System/ Network

Privatisation

- Open spaces –
 - Loss of allotments
 - Public space
- U.D.P.
- Disability Access Act
- Local Agenda 21
- Unused Resources –
 - Store rooms
- LSP –
 - Representation issues
 - Right Community groups
 - Consultation concern
- Transport –
 - Congestion Charging