

**Report of the
The Bristol Equalities Network & Lunch
9th February 2006
The Vassall Centre, Fishponds**

Jayne Applebee	City of Bristol College
Subitha Baghirathan	Voscur
Catherine Bailhache	Bristol Partnership
Shamim Baloo	Bristol Partnership
Jackie Beavington	Bristol PCT
Shahnaz Begum	Bangladeshi Women's group
Doug Binfield	BNPCT
Doug Bradford:	Looked After Children
Jo Bradford	Bristol City Council
Ed Brookes	Equalities Rep
Julie Anne Burgess:	Tenant Participation
Karen Cann	Bristol North PCT / Public Health Directorate
Jan Carling	Young Mothers Group Trust
Jo Carpenter	Easton Resident's Network
Narinder Chana	Rethink
Mary McClelland	MDF The Bipolar Organisation Bristol
Su Coombes	BCC LEA
Stuart Cunningham	RNIB
Ed Curtis	Bristol Dial-a-ride
Gill de Wolf	Bristol City Council
Aqil Farooq	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
Madu Ellis	Signpost
Ruth Hobbs	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
William Hodges	Chaired today's meeting, and Bristol LGB Forum
Sumita Hutchinson	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
Anne James	Bristol City Council
Rebecca Jelf	Great Western Learn Direct Hub
Raquib Khandker	Neighbourhood renewal
Lily Khandker	Bristol City Council
Alice Meason	Quartet Community Foundation
Helen Mott	Fawcett Society and Women's Forum
Richard Nochar	BCC
Jennie Peacock	Public Health Dept
Ruth Pitter	Voscur
Suzanne Polly	Second Step

Alex Raikes:	SARI
Ray Raine	RNIB
Guy Reid-Bailey	Signpost
Nadia Saba	BP Equalities Rep / Avon & Somerset Constabulary
Suki Sandhu	Educational Action Challenging Homophobia
Michael Sanidas	ASWCS
Carl Saunders	Avon & Somerset Constabulary
Vicky Saunders	YMGT
Adrian Seel	On site Bristol
Vandana Sharma	Birstol City Council Community Development Team, Education
Po-Yin Wan	Easton Families project
Geoff Williams	Equalities rep
Sue Wilson	Right Track
Johnv Farquahrson	Bristol Communities Education Support Group
Michael:	PCT Cancer Services
Karen:	Health visitor

Plenary

Ruth Pitter and Anne James reported back on the findings of the Equalities Focus group consultations carried out last October. The PowerPoint presentation, full data and handouts are available from Voscur or Bristol City Council Equalities Unit, and can be found on the Bristol Forward website in due course:

<http://www.bristolforward.net/>

Further discussion took place at the accompanying workshop – see below.

Workshop 1: Neighbourhood Renewal Equalities focus

Discussion about processes of making contact, consulting and working with Equalities groups. Discussion about open public meetings – they don't often work. Dedicated groundwork building trust with groups was essential, and that groups needed to see benefits when taking part in consultation.

Concern about lack of targeted work with men – the NR consultations had worked with 2 men's and information about the needs of BME men, fathers, elders, offenders and those from

socially disadvantaged or excluded communities has to be more prominent. Participants discussed the issues of isolation for instance men were less likely to seek support than women. It was noted that men were not a recognised Equalities group, and within NR areas data showed that 60% of NR activity benefits men while most volunteering work is carried out by women.

Health and LGB communities: discussion about how little is known about the health issues of Lesbians while Health services assumed that Gay men's health needs was focused around sexual health and drugs. LGB communities felt general services provided were inclusive but regarding secondary health issues attitudes among health professionals to LGB people were poor.

Crime and PCSOs: Police Community Support Officers: Street Wardens were trusted members of the community in central Bristol yet a fear that under the new pilot project community members would not be recruited to carry out this new role. Apathy by police led to greater lawlessness.

Education: desperate need to fill the gap between home and school – leading to exclusions.

Quartet: emphasised that most of the issues raised in the presentation were issues which small groups had to date received funds to address but with the Community Chest due to form part of the Single Community Programme under the BP current groups and projects could potentially lose continuation funding so therefore such work will cease.

Public agencies – what are they doing? How they were working with projects to mainstream some of this work, fund staff and projects within the community to deliver but this was met with a negative response and no examples could be given.

Issues: How could data from this project be effectively used to inform mainstream providers, encourage agencies to build into their work plans and monitor?

Working with Equalities groups: to deliver this with a community development approach there is a need for good practice guidance – is enough being done to promote the Toolkit?

Mainstream agencies are doing some positive work but this not felt by Equalities groups, why not?

Workshop 2: Subitha Baghirathan, C3 Performance Improvement (PI)

Performance improvement is certainly the buzzword in the voluntary sector. However, understanding exactly what this means, in real terms, can be confusing. Subitha exploded the Performance Improvement myth!

The C3 Partnership is interested in strengthening the Voluntary, Community and Social Economy sector and offers support to groups around organisational health. Subitha explained that Voscur's involvement in the partnership is to support equalities led and or focused groups.

An organisation can expect to receive one to one support from a PI advisor – in the form of either Subitha herself or David MacKenzie. Subitha or David will then support groups undertake a self assessment using 'Perform,' which is a diagnostic workbook that covers all aspects of an organisation's health. Once areas for improvement have been identified, an action plan is drawn up to plug the gaps. Organisations who enroll on C3 are also eligible for free training. For further information call Voscur and ask to speak to one of our Performance Improvement advisors and explore the C3 website on

Workshop 3: Avon and Somerset Police, update on their equalities work

All three police reps are happy to provide more detailed info / make connections - if you wish to contact them.

Carl Saunders: Diversity Officer (tel: 07769 887878)

Ruth Hobbs: Domestic Violence Co-ordinator (tel 01275 816579)

Aqil Farooq: General Secretary for Black Police Association (tel: 07917 213 623)

Aqil: assesses impact of issues such as recent bombings and impact on the Muslim community; works with wider community on good relationships with the police, and to feel more valued within their own community. He provided a potted history of the BPA which started in 1997 (and the Avon & Somerset BPA is one of 44 in the country). The association addresses:

- low numbers of BME officers in the force (recent statistics show 1.4% from BME background while Home Office target is 4%)
- recruitment & retention issues / barriers encountered / career development etc and referred to Steven Lawrence case and impact.
- encourages people to come forward to make contact (difficulty in light of previous negative restraints / experiences of the police)

Carl: role is very community related, trust building and putting the Black Police Association on the map.

Questions (Q) & Answers (A):

- Felt there was a necessity to raise awareness Stephen Lawrence case, young people didn't know about it. BPA felt positive outcome of high profile cases provoked change. Police highlighted other incidents which directed our knowledge i.e. peace maker killed on New Years Eve in Bristol 10 years ago which brought the community and police together very well. We need to look at what's happening in Bristol with Stephen Lawrence as a reminder.
- Question raised re 'Abolition 200' in 2007 and concern about young people's lack of education about Britain's involvement in this. Would be useful to explore how BME groups view Britishness.
- Concern at lack of black chief constables in the UK (as opposed to the USA), and that this was related to a lack of trust
- Communities had faith in Street Wardens, i.e. Stapleton Road (the most diverse street in Bristol) they the community, consequently young people were better behaved. Street wardens had gained trust, unlike the police. Why have these roles been turned into police officer (PCSOs)?
- Even those of us involved as advisors to the police (Independent Advisory Group) see and experience appalling, and violent racism outside our homes, yet we make statements and are not made aware of anything happening about it afterwards, this shatters confidence and trust in the police.
- Those of us who assist the police, i.e. sitting on the IAG, are seen as "informers," these views need to be addressed as it reverts back to trust and very little advance will be made with recruitment and retention.
- Apathy re police detection: there was a horrific two hour car chase in Easton last week – several could have been killed – what is the police policy on this? I saw the young man involved

in the chase the next day – he said he “was a passenger, roughed up a bit and that was it”!

- The Police responded to these points identifying both positive and negative impacts. A 2-hour chase seemed unacceptable, he could not comment on the matter. They would speak to Chief Constable about why individuals on the IAG felt this way – and it will not be a missed opportunity. Trust building takes time and the right people to work together. Trust is an uphill struggle for everyone and not just the police.
- A question referred to the Marlon Thomas case in Bristol of 11 years ago and problems concerning feedback of info / lack of technical detail to the community.
- Nadia Saba works in Diversity Unit in the force; she explained the new national “Citizen’s Focus Programme” which included targets for response times and emphasised that this was a recognised issue, and change will follow. Also “Neighbourhood policing” is being developed with huge emphasis on PCSOs and the need to reflect on the local community.
- Someone gave an example of a young man who wanted to join police force at 18, tried for five months but changed career path as he felt discouraged and concerned, he vowed he would tell others not to bother. Request was made for the officer(s) today to contact him.

Domestic Violence (DV):

Ruth Hobbs drives change on how the force investigates domestic violence:

- DV accounts for nearly one third of unlawful killings in this country, the police role is changing and developing, i.e. DV Liaison Officers are now Domestic Abuse Officers who primarily help victims but also have detective training.
- DV is recognised as a major problem which needs multi agency approach and is now under umbrella of public protection unit. Due to distinct overlaps DV is included as high profile with Race hate crime / child abuse investigation / prolific offenders.
- 3 areas to be addressed are: education / investigation methods / training and reduction (community awareness as on DV which now includes psychological, financial and emotional abuse, and also children as secondary victims etc)
- Concern about overemphasis on the victims and no work with perpetrators. The police responded by saying there are perpetrator programmes with the Probation Service, Crown

- Prosecution Service, Youth Offending teams, etc. Forums also identify the needs of all involved. If perpetrator is convicted they are required to attend programmes.
- The network wanted to know if there was any work with prisons? The response was that there was no direct police / prison officer work, only through probation and offenders.
 - Question about the involvement of multi-agency / statutory agencies? The police meet with voluntary organisations, plus probation / the housing and SARI and this is seen as essential in order to obtain important information and statistics.
 - Reference was made to a news item about DV in arranged marriage situations and concern that the report did not address cultural aspects. Who decides if a person is a victim / being forced? Negative impact and consequences on communities were discussed. The police responded by saying people are duped into going abroad and then forced to marry, consequently kidnap offences are inter-linked, he expressed that Islam forbids forced marriage. He agreed that the report was probably misguided and often such cases are to do with cultural / family politics.
 - The network wanted to know how the unit was meeting “hard to reach groups”? The response was the police has worked hard with DV groups but there is still a lack, i.e. of info on same sex partnerships and cultural issues. The aim is to increase the diversity of the unit to encourage more people to report, and to make more links with the right support groups in order to connect with people. The police are seeking means and ways both internally and externally to do this and actively encouraged attendees to feed in to this (tel nos. above to contact the police representatives).
 - A ‘Domestic Violence Diversity Sub-group Aims and Objectives’ handout was distributed. Feedback and any missing points were requested.
 - Other discussion points raised included:
 - We must not overlook the point that victims also include men, elders etc
 - Carl has established a steering group with SARI, BREC, Disabled People’s groups, EACH etc
 - Discussed the type of DV training given? The need for more training is being addressed, initially a front line PC will deal with it (solely with probationary training

which they had when they started as a PC). After initial assessment of situation, there are 4 gradings of officer to decide how to progress case i.e. who is victim (male, female, child) and chances of being recurrence.

- Queries as to whether mental health issues are included in risk assessments? The positive response was that it is graded and then re-graded by domestic abuse officers.
- It is possible for victims to report directly to the unit. The local station was more productive (on average there will be x35 abusive incidents before it is reported!).
- Use of non-uniformed officers have been considered in these cases but as a routine alls come through as 999 calls so the response comes from a uniform officer.

Discussion on equality issues followed and the importance of taking them to the Bristol Partnership.

Carl emphasised that he would be glad if people contacted him on any issues related to Hate Crime.

Plenary:

Led by Bristol Partnership Equalities reps: Nadia Saba, Madu Ellis and Ed Brookes, the reps explained.

Reps attend forums with vested interest on behalf of the communities they represent. They see people every day – and ask what has been done to make a difference for them, often average x50 people a week. There was no logic in the fact that there are still so many problems when so much resources are spent on these issues? The biggest problem is lack of trust.

The reps wanted to highlight real issues, e.g. weekends gang fights which impacts on the life of some reps not just on their job, the challenge is the need to stop the next person being killed and becoming the next statistic. Given the lack of resources people are out there putting their necks on the line to make changes for the sake of their community and their families, yet their communities feel hidden, they feel unaccredited for what they do, or their voices are not heard. As reps we need to raise awareness that we are here and Equalities communities need support.

Though not all reps may feel rooted to the community, all are driven by a social justice mission, i.e. health inequalities is not about diseases it's about social deprivation. Reps felt they needed to constantly raise the relevant issues and questions that others are not, such as how the problem of coronary disease can be met, issues for older people in Community Strategy documents, why technicians give certain amounts of funding to certain locations, so it is easy to scrutinise the facts and figures on paper while overlooking how it address people's needs. There was a feeling that it was difficult to be clear as to where their role was making a difference.

Attendees were reminded of the Bristol Partnership meeting next week. The reps queried the fact that BP documents relating to reducing crime had nothing on domestic abuse / targets. The informative Police workshop today explained what huge steps have begun to be made and although results could not yet be predicted there is a huge effort involved. Given that this is a local agreement which has been made to set targets, it should be necessary to that we feed in what is being done and ask how the police can be helped in their work on Domestic Abuse. In addition Hate Crime should also be highlighted as an essential issue for Equalities communities.

Points made by attendees:

- The work of the Equalities reps was applauded and how their individual good will translates in to community work; voices were being heard, the challenge was in making some aspects of the community more aware of it.
- The redirection of crime is a target yet it means different things to different people e.g. race hate crime (an example was people setting dogs on others.) Statistics and targets are useful but the reality is about issues often affecting some communities and not others. e.g. gang fights have become a sport in some parts of the city, deliberately set up (in schools) and videoed yet no overall department is responsible for addressing such matters/
- Courses have been started in prisons with African Caribbean men to address their own short comings and how they contribute to conflict. Ways have been established to prevent

repeated crimes via a proactive pilot course in Ashfield prison, and hopefully role this out to Horfield prison.

The meeting was closed by the Chair. The responsibility of the reps is to take issues which they feel to be of relevance to the Bristol Partnership and its Delivery Groups as part of the commitment to tackling issues for Equalities communities, reducing the gap and providing a fairer, safer city for all.

Lunch followed in which attendees were able to follow up issues with speakers, and network.