

Slough ChangeUp Consortium

Local Infrastructure Development Plan - 30 April 2007



Short version in plain language

ChangeUp

Managed by Capacitybuilders
supported by the Cabinet Office

The ChangeUp Programme and Slough

ChangeUp is a Government funded initiative to strengthen infrastructure within the Voluntary Sector. Infrastructure means support and advice which sustains the sector, and ensures that voluntary organisations and groups can function more effectively. In Slough the Infrastructure Development Group has been responsible for ChangeUp, and has produced a Local Infrastructure Development Plan which identifies the major problems facing the voluntary sector, and some possible solutions. This booklet sets out a 'plain language' version of the Plan.

Slough Infrastructure Development Group - Members

Slough Council for Voluntary Service	Jonathan Blackburn
Slough Race Equality Council	Sajidah Chaudhary
Shelter	Jo Southby
Weston Spirit	Maxine Willetts
Age Concern	Tracey Morgan
Means of Survival and Development	Monica Siso
Slough Refugee Support	Linda Chanan
Volunteer Centre Slough	Michael Waugaman
Faith Groups	Allen Walker
Slough Borough Council	Shelagh Cuell
Slough Borough Council	Nicky Rayner
Berks E. Primary Care Trust	Viki Wadd
Slough Business Community Partnership	Bob Jones

Problem

Small Voluntary Groups need as much help as possible to develop.

Groups have said that they need advice and support to:

- build their goals and vision
- achieve their potential
- improve their management
- obtain better funding advice
- develop their experience in Human Resources, Employment Law, Quality Assurance

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But where to get it from? Slough Council for Voluntary Service (Slough CVS) is the town's main infrastructure resource available to voluntary organisations, and is the main point of contact for delivering ChangeUp work.

Solutions

- Slough CVS provides group and organisation development support to help you identify and achieve your goals. More information from Naweeda Naqvi or Davina Prescott on 01753 524176.
- A free Employment Law advice service provided by Age Concern Slough, contact jane@acslough.org.uk
- A Committee Support programme, developed by Slough CVS

Problem

The Voluntary Sector doesn't have enough office space in Slough.

Many voluntary groups in Slough are at very early stage of development. Their 'offices' often are at home with a borrowed laptop and phone. There is a chronic shortage of suitable and affordable office accommodation for groups to build and grow their vision. There is also shortage of premises for new communities to meet to hold religious or cultural events, or to get help learning English at convenient times.

Solutions

- Slough needs a new Resource Centre for Voluntary & Community Organisations. A building which can provide meeting rooms, a community hall and additional office space to meet the needs of different groups who want to develop.
- ChangeUp is working with Slough Borough Council to identify a suitable building which can meet the needs of the Voluntary Sector, especially the needs of small newly formed groups and groups from the newly arrived communities.

The project is getting advice from Social Enterprise Berkshire, and a recent research study has helped to pinpoint the type accommodation needed.

This project is currently underway and we would hope to see the dream become a reality during the course of 2008-2009.

Problem

Volunteering does not receive the level of support it needs

Volunteering which supports the Voluntary and Community Sector in Slough is good, but it could be better in terms of numbers, 'job satisfaction' and effective contact and support to smaller organisations and groups.

Solutions

Volunteer Centre Slough is approaching this challenge on several fronts:

- A new website with an interactive members' area planned <http://volunteerslough.org.uk/>
- 'Health check' models for organisation to more easily recruit the volunteers they need (Target 2007/08)
- A review with Slough CVS how best to reach out to smaller organisations and help them improve their recruitment and retention of volunteers..
- Find out what are the obstacles in the community at large to becoming volunteers and introduce more effective ways to encourage people to volunteer . For example mentor and 'buddy' schemes for new volunteers .
- Identify what sort of volunteer skills organisations in Slough most need.
- To find ways to let potential volunteers know what is available, and to help them overcome any difficulties they encounter when they want to volunteer.
- Work more closely with local authority Stronger & Safer Communities initiatives to find more volunteers and hold on to them as 'lifelong volunteers'.

Problem

Lack of participation in decision making for new community and BME groups in Slough

Many smaller voluntary groups, Black Minority Ethnic groups and new arrivals feel that they don't have proper contact with the local authorities, and that they are not represented on the important decision-making forums in Slough.

This means that they don't have a proper voice, and don't get as much achieved as they would like to. They also feel that important issues which they identify in the community are often overlooked because they are not being communicated to the Council, and the Health Authorities.

Solutions

- A new Participation & Compact Worker at Slough Council for Voluntary Service (50% funded by Slough Borough Council).
- New 2007-2008 funding from Capacitybuilders to April 2008 means that we can continue to work on helping smaller groups influence how the services they use are designed and delivered. More information from Sara Willcocks on 01753 524176.

Slough ChangeUp Consortium will also actively seek new board members from smaller under-represented groups in Slough. The new board members role will be to ensure that statutory bodies understand what is important to these groups. For further information about becoming a board member please call Warren Feagins on 01753 524176.

Problem

Computers in the Voluntary Sector are often out of date; support and maintenance is not available

Many voluntary organisations are unable to get the most from Information Technology and Computers. The problems range from using old and unreliable equipment, out of date software, lack of knowledge of systems and how to use them productively. Most common of all is the sheer worry and expense of maintaining computer and online systems and how to quickly and affordably fix breakdowns and computer crashes.

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There are inadequate support services to help the voluntary sector to get the most out of its computers and commercial services are often more expensive than many smaller organisations can afford.

Solutions

Slough Infrastructure Development Group is working in partnership with the Berkshire ChangeUp Consortium in funding bids for more comprehensive ICT services to the Voluntary Sector. These services should include:-

- Expert advice to voluntary organisations on the most productive use of their computers
- Training in computer technology
- A reliable breakdown service which can repair or upgrade computers on site.

We will continue to work on Information & Communications Technology (ICT) issues in the voluntary sector in Slough. We will represent the Voluntary and Community Sector's interest in forging stronger ICT support services and links in the future.

Problem

Voluntary organisations are missing out on contracts from the statutory sector.

There is an increasing opportunity for voluntary groups and organisations to meet the needs of their communities by delivering services on behalf of the statutory sector. Opportunities are being missed for a variety of reasons, despite a real shift in the 'political' environment which wants to encourage the voluntary sector to become more involved in providing services.

Poor understanding of the issues and opportunities needs to be tackled more productively by both the voluntary and statutory sectors in Slough.

Solutions

- Slough CVS is working closely with Slough Borough Council and Berks East Primary Care Trust to find easier ways for the voluntary sector to bid for public Sector contracts.
- We are also working with the Council to develop procurement criteria which can be productively met by the Voluntary and Community Sector .

Slough CVS will work with groups and organisations to look at the opportunities, pitfalls and development required if contracting is suitable for them and the work they are delivering to their communities..

This will be a long haul project which encourages a culture shift, both in the voluntary and statutory sectors to change the way these valuable services to the community are delivered and funded.

For Further Information

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